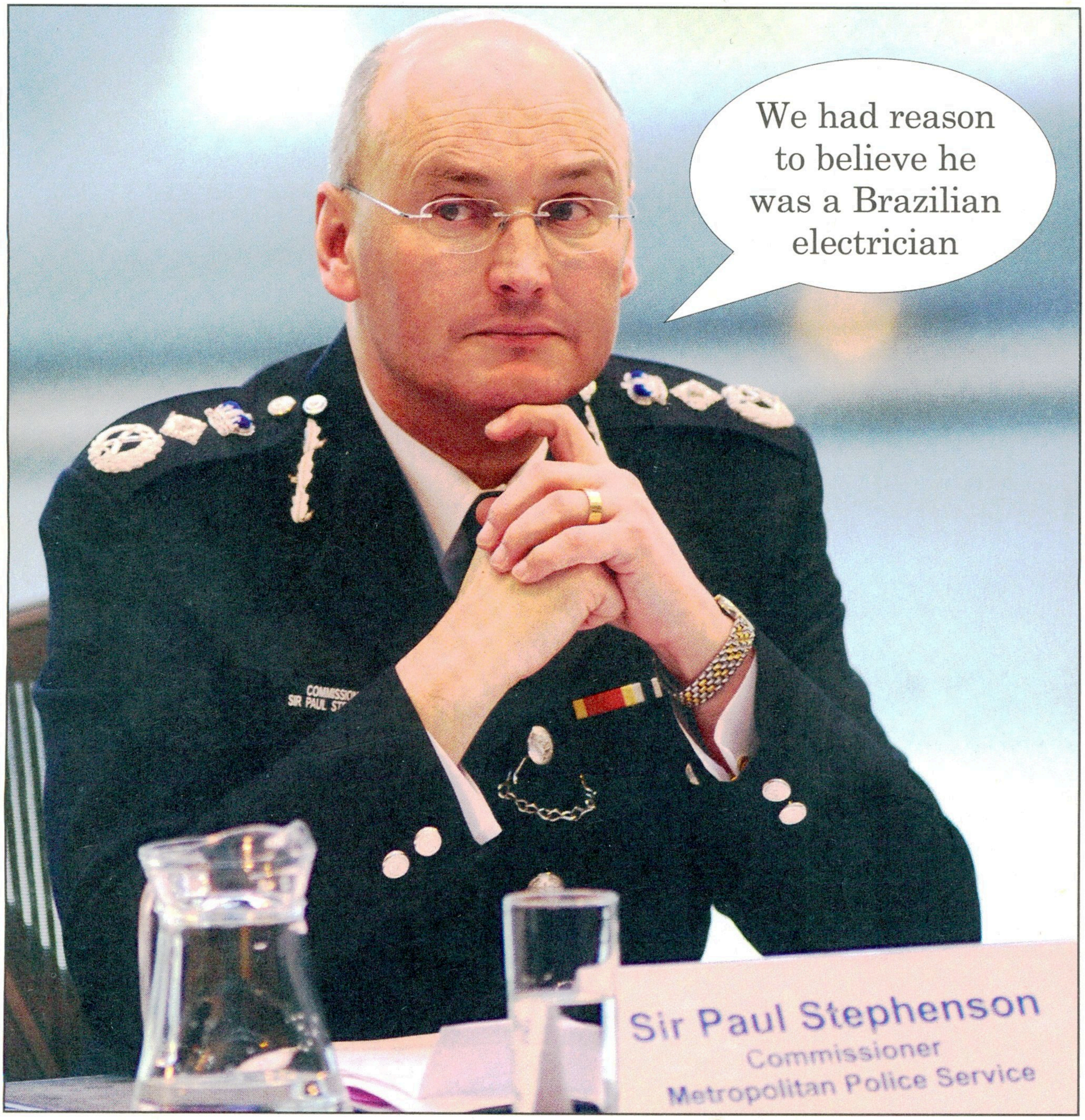
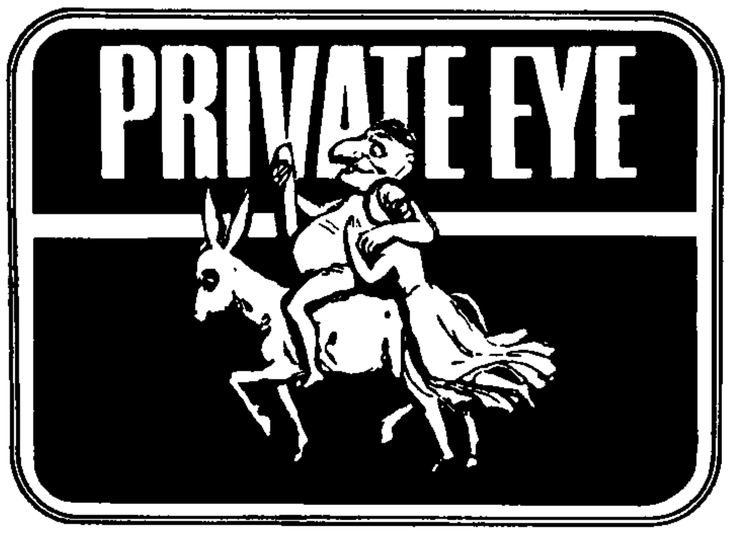
PRIVATE EYE

No. 1234
17 April –
30 April 2009
£1.50

RIOT DEATH: POLICE CHIEF SPEAKS OUT


We had reason to believe he was a Brazilian electrician
Sir Paul Stephenson
Commissioner
Metropolitan Police Service

WHAT CAR?
CAR OF THE YEAR 2009
BEST EXECUTIVE CAR



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MAIL SHOT

AS HM Revenue and Customs boss Dave Hartnett doesn't want his tax inspectors investigating the French tax domicile status that saves billionaire *Daily Mail* proprietor Lord Rothermere, aka Jonathan Harmsworth, millions of pounds every year at the expense of the little people (see *Eye* 1231), perhaps the *Eye* can help.

While the 4th Viscount Rothermere lives with his family in a £40m neo-Palladian stately home in 220 acres of grounds in Wiltshire – plus a flat in London's Eaton Square - the *Eye* has discovered that he does in fact also own an 18th century chateau in France. This may well be the connection on which he pins a continuing claim to the nebulous concept of foreign domicile and a consequent exemption from tax on income, including dividends from the Daily Mail and General Trust plc, that he keeps offshore.

The des res in question dominates the hamlet of Sainte Croix, deep in the Dordogne between the picturesque bastide towns of Beaumont and Monpazier that were built by another Englishman, Edward I, more than 700 years ago. It was acquired in 1997 by Jonathan's father Vere Harmsworth, the 3rd Viscount Rothermere, and his Korean second wife Maiko Lee. Following Vere's death in 1998 the property passed to Jonathan, the 4th Viscount. Maiko is said to have left shortly afterwards.

But can the chateau be enough of a home to sustain a claim to French domicile? It seems unlikely. The chateau's *gardien* (caretaker) told the *Eye's* Dordogne correspondent that Jonathan is indeed the proprietor, but that he does not visit. Asked what the chateau is used for, the *gardien* insisted: "*Il faudra discretion.*" Hmm. "Interdit de parler?" suggested our Franglais-speaker-on-the-spot. "Exactement!" replied the caretaker, showing rather more concern for the privacy of the rich and powerful than Rothermere's *Mail* hacks are paid to.

The reticence extends to Lord Rothermere's spokesman back in Blighty, who refused to say whether the Viscount has any other French connections that may bolster his case for the multi-million-pound non-dom tax break. The subject is "entirely a private matter".

Perhaps if the taxman had the backbone to look into it, the *Mail* boss would soon be coughing up tax at something closer to the rate at which every other Englishman has to.

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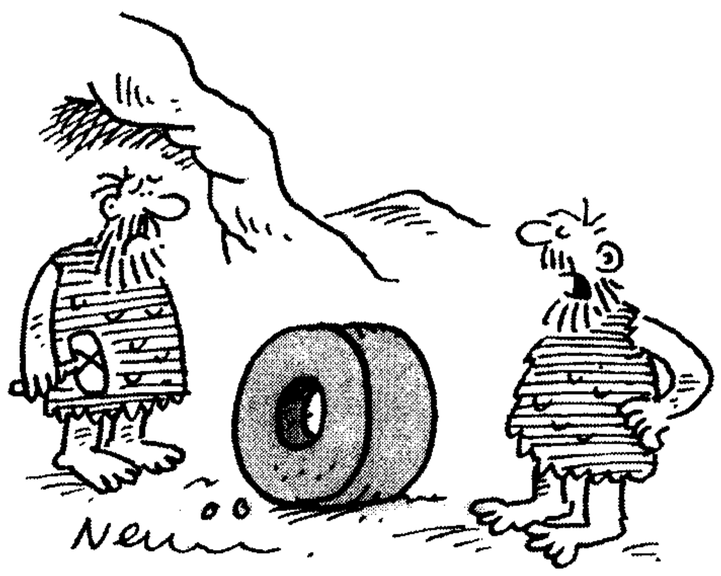
PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS/SALES
PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.
Subscription enquiries: 01795 414 871
Overseas: +44 (0) 1795 414 870 Fax: 01795 414 555.
Web: www.subsonline.co.uk
Email: private-eye@servicehelpline.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
£28 per annum. Europe and Eire £34. Airmail (rest of world) £38.
Cheques/POs to Private Eye. Mastercard/Visa.

ADVERTISING
Ten Alps Publishing, 9 Savoy Street, London WC2E 7HR.
Email: private-eye@tenalpspublishing.com
Display: 020 7878 2366 **Classified:** 020 7240 9129

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. **Printed** by BGP Ltd, Bicester OX6 7QZ.
Distributed by COMAG Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex, UB7 7QE. Tel 01895 433600.

ABC



"If it isn't electric, forget it"

SAVING THE WORLD

AMONG the G20's most pressing priorities was to sort out the banking system that caused the current global financial crisis. But bankers can rest easy. For the necessary steps – like separating "casino banking" from the boring business of lending and deposit-taking – were avoided in favour of relying on a discredited old talking shop.

Thus it was that the Financial Stability Forum (FSF) got a shiny new name – henceforth it will be known as the Financial Stability *Board* – and will, in the words of the G20 communique, "Provide early warning of macro-economic and financial risks and the actions needed to address them."

Ring any bells? It should; because this is precisely what the FSF is supposed to have been doing since it was set up in the wake of the 1998 collapse of the Long Term Capital Management hedge fund (in place of proper regulation of hedge funds, just as the latest move comes in place of a proper restructuring of the banking industry).

Ten years ago this month, a then thrusting Gordon Brown – who claims much credit for creating the FSF – promised that the forum would provide "a new process which makes cooperation between international financial institutions and the regulators a fact of life. Over time it can develop into the world's early warning system for regional and global financial risk."

Although the Basel-based talking shop has failed spectacularly on this score for a decade, with a world economic crisis to show for it, changing one third of its name and asking it to try harder is obviously what's needed. So that's the banks sorted!

OLYMPIAN FOLLY?

THE director of one of the companies that, according to MPs, "lined their own pockets" at the public's expense, has been put in charge of selling off the 2012 Olympic site after the London games.

Communities secretary Hazel Blears and London mayor Boris Johnson agreed to put one of Labour's favourite businesswomen in charge of the disposal: Baroness Margaret Ford, a Labour peer and close friend of John Prescott, who will run the "2012 legacy delivery company" whose job is to exploit the post-games site.

Since 2003 Ford has been a director of privatisation at PFI specialist Serco. In 2006, the Commons public accounts committee (PAC) denounced a "refinancing" deal in which Serco and its partners cashed in huge profits from the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital PFI (*Eyes passim*), leaving the government with the bill. The Tory chair of the PAC said the deal was "the unacceptable face of capitalism".

During Ford's time at Serco, the firm has also been slated for cost cutting and "system failures" at youth detention centres that contributed to an inmate's death. But both Labour and the Tories still believe she will secure the best value for the public from the Olympic site. Johnson said he was "excited both by her ideas and motivation", and a "delighted" Olympics minister Tessa Jowell pointed to her "very strong record of achievement".

Ford has given up one of her jobs – at the Royal Bank of Canada – to take the £95,000-a-year three-day-a-week Olympics post. However, she seems to be retaining her place on the Serco board, even though the firm has a clear interest in the Olympic site (it already has the contract to run the Docklands Light Railway out to the stadium).

Ford also appears to be staying on the board of property firm Grainger plc, which specialises in private rented accommodation, including partnerships with local authorities, which might be interested in making money from the Olympic site too.

GOODWIN GROUNDED

OUR report in the last *Eye* that Sir Fred Goodwin is honorary Air Commodore to 602 Squadron of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force has set many moustaches twitching.

Indeed, not since James Bigglesworth set off in pursuit of the fugitive financier Otto Brandt in *Biggles and the Missing Millionaire* have RAF officers been so eager to give a disgraced banker a good tail-gunning.

A retired flight lieutenant, Iain Paton, posted an e-petition about Goodwin on the 10 Downing Street website last week asking the PM to "humbly petition Her Majesty The Queen to command the removal of Goodwin from this post" on the grounds that "his professional and personal standards have fallen far below the expected standards of a Royal Air Force officer".

NEWS

POOR SHOW, GORDON

BRITAIN's share of the $50bn Gordon Brown promised to the world's poorest countries via a new World Bank fund is £300m. But on close examination it turns out to be as big a sleight of hand as the G20's headline promise of $50bn.

The £300m will come from Britain's development finance institution – in other words the *Eye*'s old chums at CDC, formerly the Commonwealth Development Corporation but now the publicly-owned fund that has made big profits investing in private equity businesses at the expense of more developmentally valuable enterprises.

At the last count CDC was sitting on £1.4bn of cash, having sold many of its big-earning investments. But it has made commitments to fresh investments exceeding £1.4bn. And it's some of this already-committed cash that will be lent to the World Bank's new "global trade liquidity pool", meaning that commitments already made will have to be ditched.

The Department for International Development says the money will be "sourced from CDC's balance sheet", but still dresses up this redirection of existing money as: "New financial boost for businesses in developing countries from UK government". In fact it's as new as the spinning behind it.

And what of the $50bn promised? In fact G20 governments have agreed "to provide $3-4bn in voluntary bilateral contributions", while the remaining $46-47bn is optimistically predicted to be coughed up by the private sector. So, er, not quite $50bn after all.

G20 NUMBER CRUNCHING

$50bn Funds "earmarked" for the world's poorest countries by the G20 summit

$50bn Annual increase in aid to the world's poorest countries promised at the 2005 G8 Gleneagles summit

$20bn Actual increase in aid, according to the OECD survey of what donor countries will give next year

GOOD OLD DAZE

G20 SUMMIT commitments to reform the financial system contrast starkly with what's happening in the real world, where the government is intent on returning to the good old days of liberated financial services.

Back in October 2007, weeks after the run on building society-turned-bank Northern Rock, an obscure piece of legislation came on to the statute book. Nodded through parliament before the credit crunch, the Building Societies (Funding) and Mutual Societies (Transfers) Act 2007 gave the Treasury power to allow building societies to borrow 75 percent of their funding (up from 50 percent) on the wholesale markets – the same wholesale markets that then froze and forced taxpayers to rescue Northern Wreck.

But the Treasury would have to consult on any such change, which it has now duly done. The obvious conclusion would be not to repeat the mistakes of the past. But rather than take the chance to reject further relaxation outright, the Treasury still "supports the principle that building societies should have greater flexibility over their funding strategies and will review the decision in two years' time".

In other words, when the good times return, the rules can be eased – exactly the approach that got the Wreck and so many others to where they are today.

STREET OF SHAME

A MONTH has passed since Ashley Cole obtained an injunction to stop the *Sun* publishing a picture of him sitting with a blonde in a nightclub (as footballers tend to) while his wife was away climbing a mountain for charity. Although the *Sun* made a front-page hoo-ha about the court order at the time, there's still no sign of an appeal.

Nor will there be. For, the *Eye* can reveal, the photo of Cole and the blonde was far too innocent and boring to be worth printing. The *Sun* decided instead to wind up Cole with hints of what might be in the picture, in the hope that he would panic and scamper down to the high court. This would be a far better story, implying that the photo really must be sensational. But would even the clod-hopping Cole be stupid enough to fall for the ruse?

Of course. And, on the night he won his injunction, there was champagne all round at Wapping.

HER BRITANNIC Majesty's Westminster press corps showed their foreign counterparts how to do it at the G20 summit.

Other nationalities had been told to get to the ExCel centre in east London as early as 5.30am (one or two TV camera personnel had to be calmed down by police when they lost their tempers). But the Commons lobby hacks swanned in a couple of hours later.

Despite reports that German reporters had pinched all the best seats in the press hall, the Brits wandered up to a line of the best-sited desks which had "RESERVED OFFICIALS" on them and calmly removed the notices and sat down.

The notices had been put there for them by "sources in Downing Street".

***GUARDIAN* politics reporter Nick Watt nearly took an early bath at the G20.**

One minute after free breakfasts stopped being served at the ExCel canteen, the health-conscious Watt tried to procure himself an apple. "You can't go over there – security!" barked a jobsworth. A stand-off ensued and it took a canteen lady to ensure a peace. The dogged Watt got his apple in the end, though.

BEHIND-the-scenes pressure to force Glen Moreno to resign as chairman of Pearson, owner of the *Financial Times*, appears to have failed.

Until last year Moreno was a trustee of the Liechtenstein Global Trust, a secretive bank which was found to have facilitated tax evasion on a massive scale (*Eye* 1228) – and he was fiercely condemned for it by a committee of the US Senate, including the then senator Barack Obama. As a result of this embarrassment Moreno is to be removed from his role as acting chairman of UK Financial Investments, which manages the government's stakes in the part-nationalised banks.

Senior hacks at the *FT* feel their editorial campaign to clean up the world's financial system may not be taken entirely seriously so long as Moreno remains chairman. Given that he has now reached the age of 65, it was hoped he could be persuaded to retire – but to their dismay he has announced he will be standing for re-election at Pearson's AGM, due to take place on 1 May.

Such appointments are normally a formality. Will the major institutional shareholders, including Legal and General, make an exception in this case?

TWO cheers from the *Guardian* at news that the G20 summiteers agreed to crack down on offshore tax avoidance. "Offshore webs are so complex," the paper observed, that "as in battling vampires – in taking on tax havens, what is really needed is a great blast of daylight".

As the *Eye* has reported many times, the Guardian Media Group is no stranger to tax havens itself, teaming up with those "vampires" at private equity firm Apax to buy Emap's business magazine division via offshore companies in the Cayman Islands and Luxembourg last year.

And now GMG is to appoint a new chairman to succeed Paul "tax havens" Myners. Step forward John Peace, deputy chairman of Standard Chartered bank, which boasts on its website: "Effective offshore banking helps you preserve your global wealth by providing a safe, secure, and stable location for your assets. As a leading provider of offshore financial services, Standard Chartered offer a full range of products and services to cover all your offshore financial needs."

Just the man to run Guardian Media Group!

O·B·N

And, frankly, being told that your footwear is 'gorge' by the woman who has, more than anyone, dictated the style of a generation is like being touched by the hand of God.

PAUL FLYNN on Kate Moss
Grazia

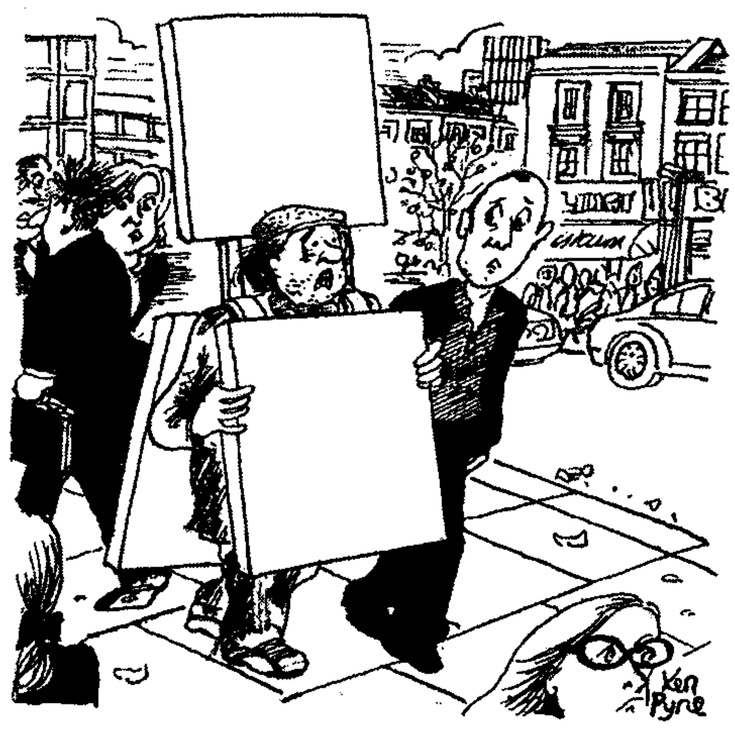
Submitted by A.M. Graham

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

"SMOOTHIE operators sell out to Coke," ran the headline in the *Independent* on 7 April.

"Have the founders of the Innocent label compromised their ethics by taking £30m from a corporate giant?" Elsewhere in the paper, a leading article brooded fretfully about "great piles of cash trumping high principle".

Readers of that morning's *Indie* also received a curious glossy lifestyle magazine called *The Red Bulletin*, which is described on its front cover as "an almost independent monthly magazine". What exactly is *The Red Bulletin*? Why it's a 100-page glossy piece of advertorial, edited and bankrolled not by the *Indie* but by the Austrian-based global drinks giant Red Bull. Great piles of cash all round!



"I've found advertising has really dropped off"

WHAT a coincidence that Wilmington, the company that owns *Press Gazette*, should announce the magazine's closure less than a week after the British Press Awards. The BPAs were by far the most lucrative event in the calendar for *Press Gazette*, which lost money on producing the magazine for years.

Wilmington made no mention of closure ahead of the 2009 Press Awards on 31 March and with good reason. Would it have found it so easy to charge a corporate rate of £3,000 per table, plus VAT, if the 700 paying guests knew the magazine which supported the awards was about to fold? With more than 60 tables at the Grosvenor House Hotel, it was a nice earner for Wilmington. No wonder it still wants to continue the awards without the bother of producing the magazine – inspired, no doubt, by those BBC execs who for several years carried on hosting a *What the Papers Say* awards lunch while killing off the programme itself.

UNDER the headline "SCOT A WASTE", the *Daily Mirror* lambasts Bournemouth council for hiring a transport boss who lives 400 miles away. "James Duncan, who is in his 50s, flies from his home in Scotland for a working week in the south coast resort, and goes back again at weekends."

Oddly enough, three of the *Mirror*'s own executives make a similar journey each week. Managing director Mark Hollinshead, finance director Mark Mountford and HR director Lesley Somerville fly from Glasgow to London each Tuesday morning and return on Thursday afternoons, except when pressing matters such as Scottish *Daily Record* hacks striking in protest at compulsory redundancies detain them north of the border.

Meanwhile the *Daily Record*'s head of news, Andy Lines, makes the reverse commute every week, travelling from his home in Hertfordshire to his desk in Glasgow. As evidenced by his recent Facebook posting: "There can surely be nothing more bizarre in life than landing on an Easyjet flight at Stansted and taxiing past Air Force One !!!"

IN LAST Tuesday's *Evening Standard*, Amar Singh's byline on the Tamil protest story was replaced by that of former crime hack Rob Singh.

No mean feat, given that Rob Singh was fired by the *Standard* before Christmas as part of its cost-cutting drive. On the afternoon in question he was busy at work for the *Standard*'s Murdochian rival, *The London Paper*.

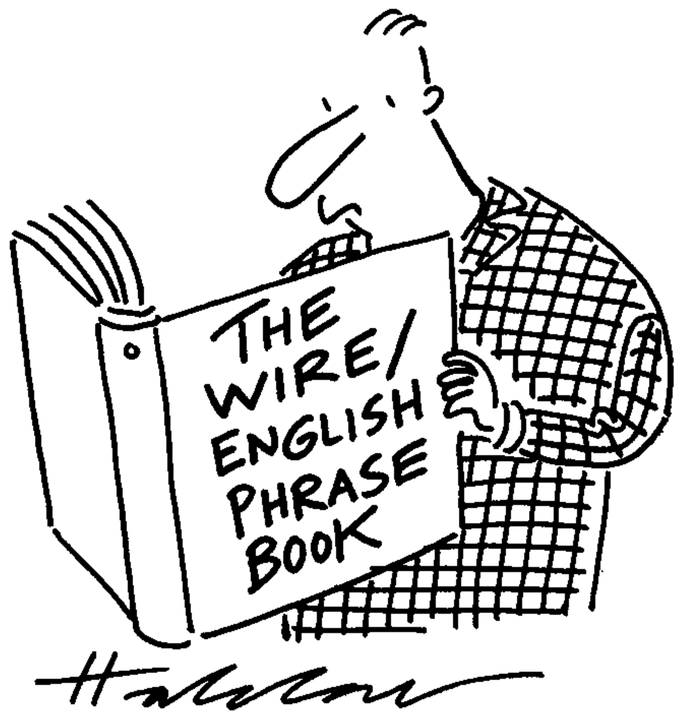
Updated classics

ALTHOUGH columnists and freelances at the *Daily Telegraph* are on short rations, and countless staff have been made to walk the plank, editor Will "Thirsty" Lewis still has plenty of doubloons to spray about when it comes to hiring executives on six-figure salaries.

Jeremy Warner, the *Indie*'s business editor, is the latest to jump aboard the good ship Thirsty, following Ben Brogan from the *Mail*. Lewis's obsession remains the internet, however, so he has recruited a digital development director, Nancy Cruickshank, who gets to bring her secretary from her old job. *Telegraph* hacks are wondering which of them will be thrown overboard to make room for all the new arrivals.

HARD times continue on the *Telegraph* sports desk, with subs now being asked to cover football games on their days off and for no added pay. Still, it's not all gloom and doom for those at the top.

Cricket columnist Derek Pringle recently went to see executive editor Mark "Skippy" Skipworth to complain that although he hadn't used up his holiday allowance last year, company policy prevented him from carrying it over into 2009. "Don't worry," Skippy told him. "Those regulations don't apply to the likes of you and me."



"HALF of primary pupils fail to master English and maths," read a headline in last week's *Times*.

Oh dear. Basic reading and number comprehension isn't a strong point among *Times* subs either, it seems. The story went on to reveal that, in fact, around 25 percent of pupils left primary school without reaching the targets for English and maths.

Five children among the dead as earthquake measuring 6.3 on Richter scale strikes the Abruzzo region of central Italy
> Underwater volcano erupts off Tongan coast
> Buying property in Italy's Abruzzo region

Times Online

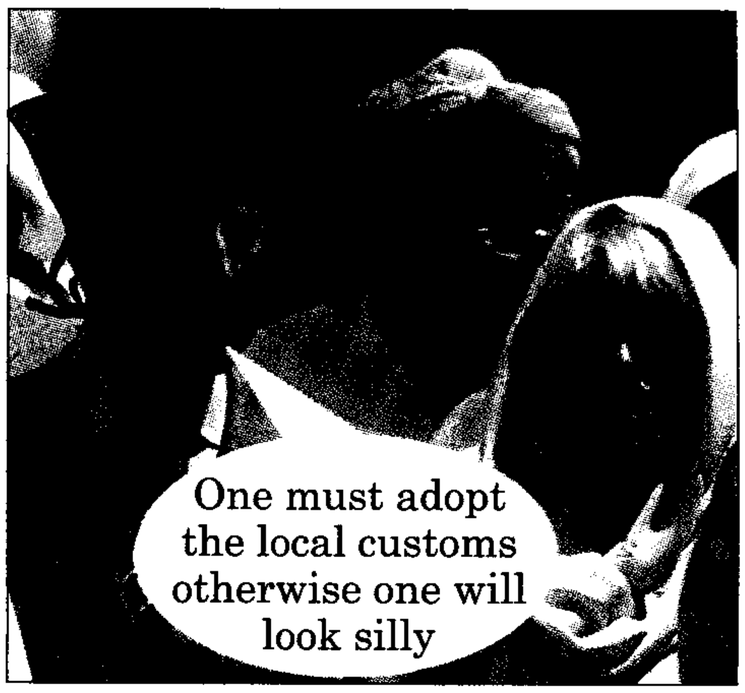
LUVVIES

"I'm perhaps more fearless than other actors, but it doesn't mean I'm better than them," he says. "I've been to unpretty places with the roles I've played, and I'm attracted to reckless abandon. I like being taken to the edge of my own abyss."

RHYS IFANS
Times

Submitted by Bert Whelan.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.



THE *Daily Mail*'s moaning harpies Allison Pearson and Amanda Platell have their bloomers in a twist after fed-up editor Paul Dacre sought to teach the spoilt Glendas a lesson. Dacre announced that unless each of them turned in a column every week, he would get new girl Sandra Parsons to write one instead.

The usual form at the *Mail* is that absent columnists don't have stand-ins, merely a line saying that Richard Littlejohn (or whoever) "is away". True to his word, however, Dacre recruited Parsons to write Platell's Saturday column on 4 April while she was on holiday. Will Pearson get the same undermining treatment the next time she dares take a week off?

Quite possibly: it seems Dacre isn't quite as enamoured by so-called star writer Pearson as once he was. "He thinks she's becoming a problem," reveals an Associated executive. "Still, at least she'll never be as shit as [the *Telegraph*'s] Liz Hunt." High praise indeed.

"IS THIS the end for local papers?" asks a heartfelt cover story in the *Guardian*'s G2 supplement. "Across the country, local newspapers are being cut to the bone or closed down. Is regional journalism doomed? And if it is, what does that mean for local democracy?"

The six-page feature dwells at length on these terrible cuts but plays down one important fact: plenty of local papers actually remain profitable, it's just that their parent companies have problems with debt and deficits. Indeed, buried deep within the piece was the admission that the *Guardian*'s own parent company, Guardian Media Group, is culling 245 jobs at the *Manchester Evening News*, *Reading Evening Post* and dozens of its other regional titles. The reason? "In order to stay in profit," said G2. It didn't mention the other reason why these cuts are so necessary: to subsidise the *Grauniad* and *Observer*, which lost £26m in 2008, and will probably lose even more this year.

HOW JOURNALISM WORKS

WHEN Muckspreader drew attention in the last *Eye* to how the Department for the Elimination of Farming and Rural Affairs had dragged animal health experts away from their work to attend a training day "banging drums", we made it clear the original story had emerged in *Farmers Weekly* (on 12 March) from a disillusioned vet.

No such credit was given by Richard Littlejohn, however, when he repeated the tale in the *Daily Mail* on 7 April; nor by John Bingham on the front page of the *Daily Telegraph* when he rehashed the drumming vets story in its entirety the following day.

Given the exposure, it could only be a matter of time before the story made it on to the front page of the BBC News website – again with no credit for the poor old *Farmers Weekly*.

MINISTERS from Gordon Brown down have got in a terrible mess letting off bits of their subsidised property empires. But the fall-out could affect those outside government who benefited from their munificence.

The prime minister got away with making an apology after the standards and privileges committee found he had broken Commons rules by subletting his constituency office. But home secretary Jacqui Smith has put her sister in a more difficult position after claiming she rented a room in her sibling's London flat while having claimed £116,000 in second-home allowances for her family "second" home.

Questions Smith's sister will have to answer include: has she declared her rental income to the Inland Revenue? If she has a mortgage, did she get the permission of her building society/bank to sublet? Did she notify the local council she was subletting? And is the house in compliance with local authority regulations for subletting?

Employment minister Tony McNulty meanwhile has put his parents in an invidious position after it was revealed that, until January, he had claimed up to £14,000 a year since 2001-2 for a home in his Harrow East constituency where his parents live. McNulty's mother and father face some of the same questions as Smith's sister.

Then there is Geoff "Buff" Hoon, embroiled in a row about allowances he claimed for his constituency home while subletting his London flat. Let's hope the paperwork is up to his normal high standards!

"Hi, money, I'm Second Home!"

CALLED TO ORDURE

JOHN BERCOW MP represents the people of Buckingham, a solid Tory seat; but his constituency might as easily be that well-known suburb of self-advancement, Arslikhan Central.

Bercow's Commons interventions in the past month show that this once foaming right-winger (a 1980s stalwart of the charmless Federation of Conservative Students) has become a paid-up member of the Labour appreciation society. Not that Bercow would be the first slippery fish to sit for Buckingham. One of his predecessors was Cap'n Bob Maxwell, aka the Bouncing Czech.

Having been chucked off the Tory frontbench, Bercow has developed a far-fetched plan to become Speaker of the Commons. He knows that many Tory MPs would sooner have their balls broiled by Peter Mandelson's chef than vote for Speaker Bercow, so he needs to suck up to Labour MPs to lure their votes when the present Speaker, Michael Martin, retires.

Bercow has swapped his hanger-flogger views for issues more in keeping with the people's party. His new interests include HIV sufferers in Burma, political prisoners in Uzbekistan, war crimes in the Sudan, human rights in Colombia, political prisoners in Cuba, Nepal's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and, er, capital punishment in North Korea. A veritable saint! All hail the Desmond Tutu of the Home Counties!

On 12 March Bercow clashed with veteran Tory Sir Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield) about letting schoolchildren hold a debate in the Commons chamber. Bercow told Winterton he was talking "nonsense on stilts" (this sort of dated rhetoric is very Bercow). Winterton observed that when he had campaigned for him in Buckingham pre-1997, Bercow had indicated he wasn't really right-wing enough for his tastes.

In the same debate Bercow gushed over Labour MPs Martin Salter (Reading W) and Sharon Hodgson (Gateshead). Salter praised Bercow's "statesmanlike intervention" – but did so with enough of a curl on his lip to suggest that he thought Bercow was a prat. Indeed, many recent Labour ripostes to Bercow, while outwardly positive, may have the double edge of irony.

On 13 March Lindsay Hoyle (Chorley) almost choked over Bercow's "spot on" endorsement of the government's statutory redundancy proposals. Hoyle: "There are no closed ears on our Labour frontbench — I am sure that everybody is listening to what the hon. Gentleman has said." Translation: no doubt you could defect if you wanted, chum. Dennis Skinner (Lab, Bolsover) remarked that Bercow was so on-message he should be given the job of chairing the committee for the bill. Skinner did not mean this in a nice way.

Bercow stitched up his own party colleagues. Jonathan Djanogly, a gormless gulper on the Tory frontbench. Djanogly was practically sunk mid-voyage by a Bercow torpedo. Bercow resumed his seat with a triumphant sneer. In his inability to control his facial muscles he is similar to Boy Blunder David Miliband.

On 24 March we find Bercow praising a Lib Dem, "the distinguished lawyer, Lord Thomas of Gresford", and taking a swipe at former Tory home secretary David Waddington. The minister at the despatch box, Bridget Prentice, was relieved to be helped out of a hole. "The hon. Gentleman, as always, puts the argument so eloquently that I simply endorse what he says," simpered Prentice. Bercow beamed.

Two days later Bercow urged Labour's Roger Berry to go further in demanding better things for the poor of Burma. "I rarely disagree with the hon. Gentleman," smarmed Bercow, "but I think that he errs on the side of generosity towards the powers that be, and I caution him against the development of such a tendency." This from one of the House's most ardent brown-nosers!

That same day, Skinner made a lame joke about how the Tories should dump their inheritance tax proposals in a waste disposal site in Bolsover. Few Labour MPs laughed. One Tory nearly split his sides in mirth. Who he? Bercow, of course.

In discussions about Africa (*NB not Uganda. Ed*), Bercow said that former "new" Labour minister Tom Clarke had "dazzled me with his usual display of knowledge and eloquence". Of the lumbering Mike Gapes (Lab, Ilford S) he said: "He has vast experience of international affairs stretching back a number of decades and deploys it to full effect."

During a Westminster Hall debate chaired by Bercow, Home Office minister Shahid Malik said: "It is a pleasure to be engaging in this debate under your stewardship, Mr. Bercow. You are my favourite Conservative MP." It is hard not to suspect that Labour MPs are taking the piss.

Sometimes the Tories hit back at their cuckoo. Bercow interrupted a speech by Peter Lilley (Con, Harpenden) to voice some minor disquiet about American foreign policy. "I am a keen supporter of President Obama," he said, "but it does no harm to underline the urgency of the matter." Lilley: "I am sure that President Obama is as relieved as I am to know that he has my hon. Friend's support." Miaow.

Bercow got back on track on 1 April, praising the "mellifluous tones" and "reasonable" nature of one ministerial Dalek, Gillian Merron. Tory MP Christopher Chope (Christchurch) tried to ask Merron about Darfur. Bercow, with leaden astonishment: "Chope the humanitarian!" He was within his rights to be sarcastic about rightwinger Chope's interest in humanitarian matters. But why should we feel any differently about the "Tory" member for Buckingham?

'Gavel Basher'

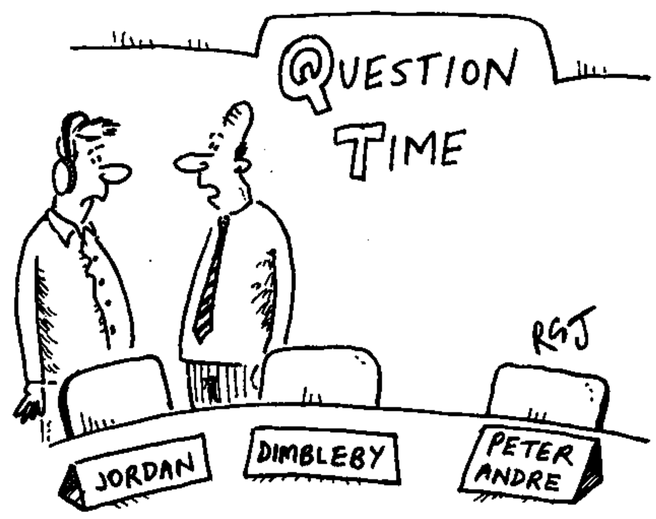
ONE hope for getting a few quid into the Treasury coffers is pawning public assets, PFI-style. And last July Treasury chief secretary Yvette Cooper brought in Gerry Grimstone, a one-time Treasury civil servant who cut his teeth on Mrs Thatcher's early privatisations before becoming a *banker, to do just this.*

"I will be taking a hard look at the incentives around assets in the public sector," he said, "and at whether the government should be more ambitious on disposals – with the aim of delivering a better deal for the taxpayer."

It can only be hoped that the taxpayer gets a better deal than investors in the private equity business, Candover, that Grimstone now chairs and which last month announced it was looking for buyers to dig it out of a deep hole. Shares have fallen from over £20 six months ago to just above £1 last week.

Candover managing director Colin Buffin explained that the dire performance reflected "the impact of the global economic downturn… compounded by the impact of leverage in the capital structures has resulted in a significant decline in the [fund's value]". In plain English, too much borrowing for shaky assets – precisely the medicine Grimstone can now administer to the taxpayer.

PS: In the cosily overlapping worlds of government and private equity, Candover was the financial force behind the creation in 2002 of Aspen Insurance, the Bermudan insurance company, appointing as its chairman the current financial services minister, Lord Myners.



"Do you think we'll know when we've dumbed it down too much?"

WORLD OF SPORT

WHILE the government promises to pour money in to community sports clubs before London 2012, millions of these pounds could be snatched by the music industry.

Sheffield MP Angela Smith raised the issue during a Commons debate, saying Britain's sports clubs could have to pay an extra £6.1m a year if plans go ahead to make them buy Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL) licences. The licence would be necessary for any club playing so much as a CD while a couple of oldies had a cuppa after a game of bowls.

Clubs already need a £369 licence from the Performing Rights Society, which enforces rights in music and lyrics; but until now not-for-profit organisations have generally been exempt from the PPL licence which enforces rights in recordings. But the UK Intellectual Property Office is consulting on repealing or reducing that exemption.

Around 37,000 sports clubs would then need PPL licences costing between £104 and £163 each. Smith said it was fine to expect a club running a disco for profit to pay for the music rights, but noted that "a rowing club that plays a CD when people are warming up is very different".

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

A REPORT by campaign group the Taxpayers' Alliance has condemned Brussels bureaucrats for squandering billions of EU taxpayers' money on red tape and subsidies.

The report, "Food for Thought" by Dr Lee Rotherham, said the current common agricultural policy (CAP) budget cost £66bn in increased red tape over the past ten years and called for it to be scrapped. It also showed that major corporate firms such as Tate & Lyle and Nestlé were benefiting from millions in subsidies (£357m and £38m respectively), as well as bodies which appear to have little to do with agriculture, such as Belfast International Airport and the Cambridge Pet Crematorium, while small farmers got nothing.

The total CAP budget is now £42bn, which includes £72m paid for civil servants, and the European commission wants to increase the entire budget by another £400m next year.

EU agriculture minister Mariann Fischer-Boel recently responded to outrage over commissioners' inflated pensions with the boast: "I'm worth the millions." EU taxpayers and farmers may not agree. Commission spokesperson Johannes Laitenberger explained, meanwhile, that their world "had nothing to do with the economic crisis of the world outside", and that payments to commissioners were just a way to preserve their independence.

The commission has also refused to modify the EU's multi-billion budget, despite the recession and its own profligate spending sprees, while EU budget commissioner Dalia Grybauskaite said all 27 EU countries would just have make up any shortfall themselves.

COVER-UPS LATEST

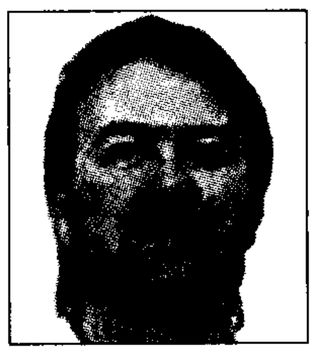
EVERY humble local authority fraud investigation officer knows that when involved in an operation to catch a suspected fraudster and carrying documents, they must have a cover sheet – often a photocopy of a crossword to while away the time – so details of the operation cannot be seen by passers-by.

Whether Bob Quick, Britain's former senior counter-terrorism officer who was forced to resign after his entry-level security blunder, could now get a job as even a council fraud investigator must be in doubt.

AS recession bites and dole queues lengthen, the nation searches for a source of comfort. Cometh the hour, cometh the man, and in the blurb for his new book, the Labour spin doctor turned psychotherapist Derek "Dolly" Draper promises that his instructions on mental wellbeing will do nothing less than "help you be a better wife, husband, parent and friend – help you be a better you".

MAN IN THE EYE

DOLLY DRAPER



In his quest to "heal our damaged internal worlds", Dolly assures readers of *Life Support* that he can take them through the human condition from "dealing with your past" and "falling in love" through to – er – "our hidden envy of Britney Spears".

While no one doubted Draper was a ruthless spin doctor, many wonder about his new career as a head doctor. On his website, Dolly says he has an "M.A. in clinical psychology and spent three years in Berkeley, California, training full time to be a psychotherapist". The *Guardian* made the natural assumption he had trained at Berkeley University – one of the most renowned in America – and then had to report that Draper studied at the Wright Institute, a private foundation, which is in Berkeley California but has nothing to do with the university.

Next the *Observer* implied that he was a scientific pioneer whose "work on curing depression won a Mind award". Doctors looking for details of the "Draper cure" will search in vain. Dolly has published no medical research in a peer-reviewed journal. Nor is he studying depression at a university or hospital – he runs a private practice in central London. It turns out Mind gave him its "journalist of the year" award for an article he co-authored about depression in the glossy self-help magazine *Psychologies*, where he is a columnist. The charity did not mention that he was on his way to discovering a cure.

Psychologies is not Draper's only media berth. So numerous are his appearances he is a contender Raj Persaud's vacant crown of medialand's favourite shrink. And he is willing to fight for the prize.

When "Gimpy," the alias of a science blogger, questioned his credentials, Dolly sent him the warning "I would be more careful. I ask that you correct your original post by midday today or I will place this matter in the hands of my lawyers, Schillings." As previous *Eyes* have reported, suing sceptical scientists is a new line of business for London's ravenous libel lawyers. Draper seems happy to feed their new habit.

Mainstream journalists are fair game too. In a question and answer session with *Independent* readers, he was asked about "squaring up to a journalist" who wrote something he didn't like. "As a qualified psychotherapist, is your view that this is a sensible way to process anger?"

"I do actually," growled Dolly. "That guy impugned my professional integrity, having got some basic facts wrong that he should have checked. His paper has since published a correction. But I was angry, very angry and I think, within reason and on occasion, expressing anger is a good thing to do."

His fellow therapists are finding his cheesy machismo hard to take. In the *Mail*, Dolly declared that he never used the washing machine or vacuum cleaner. "There's a Draper family joke passed down the generations," he guffawed. "When asked to do domestic chores by our wives, we Draper men retort: 'What's the point of having a dog if you have to bark yourself'?"

If that sounded sexist, it wasn't, he insisted. He was not being lazy but living out his biological destiny. He told the *Mail* he had learned about gender differences while researching his book and, "reached the conclusion that, despite the drive for equality in recent decades, real differences do exist. And far from worrying about this, we should actually celebrate it."

Dolly's praise for manly indolence was too much for Dr Petra Boynton, a psychologist at University College, London. "Resentment, arguments and psychosexual problems" grow when women do more unpaid work in the home, she wrote. Would Draper really tell women patients to accept that a man who refused to use a washing machine was playing his part in the natural order?

Draper did not understand the evidence, she continued. His advice was "worrying" and "more than a little sinister". Dr Boynton should watch out. Dolly may have left "new" Labour but his lawyers can still find out where she lives.

TUC NUDES

THE WORLDS of escort agencies and trade unions have become intimately entwined thanks to the activities of the International Union of Sex Workers, a branch of the GMB's London region.

The IUSW, which represents strippers, lap dancers, porn actors and the like, is now recruiting owners of escort agencies to its ranks. They in turn can use their trade union membership to promote the sex industry and campaign against government measures to restrict it.

Among the agencies exploiting their union credentials are the North-east based Christony Companions and Selectaescort, which promotes the IUSW on its blog and uses its logo among ads for the women it has on offer.

Christony runs a monthly web-based competition. First prize is the chance for punters to win four hours with one of the agency's girls, or two hours with two girls. Presumably the time is spent discussing the GMB's response to quantitative easing or the need for a fiscal stimulus.

Christony is run by a gay couple, John Dockerty and Douglas Fox. Dockerty advertises his GMB membership on the signature he uses on the agency's internet forums, next to the visuals of which credit cards are accepted to pay for women.

On Christony's web forum Dockerty has claimed that despite being "a good old fashioned Tory and the unions tend to be left wing, it is very important that through the GMB we are able to gain access to government and through the TUC to other union and labour rights organisations and are contacting other unions groups such as printers etc and getting a good response". In another post Dockerty points out: "Union membership offers the possibility of a shield."

Forty percent of the GMB's membership are women. The union claims it is "at the forefront of the fight for equality within trade unions". Just fancy that!

'Blacklegover'

"It's Somalian pirate radio"

[illegible] irresistible promises he and Nicky Campbell have extracted from BBC managers in return for all this cheerleading.

nois. It rather prompts an example of a rhetorical question: whatever happened to the concept of BBC balance?

And, as well as aping another show going out at the same time, *The Speaker* is also worryingly made a film about how this Prez has restored the forgotten art of political rhetoric?

Yes, you can, said the friendly controller of BBC2, and so here was Botney in a beanie, joining the crowds in chilly Washington

MEDIA NEWS

THE BBC's "ground-breaking" plan to form a partnership with ITV, sharing studios and even news footage with its commercial rival, was designed to counter growing pressure to force the Beeb to share part of the licence fee

HEALTH SPECIAL

Whistleblowing in the wind

A KEY question for the investigation into the appalling standards of emergency care at Mid-Staffordshire hospital is: "Why did no member of staff blow the whistle sooner?"

In a 2006 Healthcare Commission survey, only 27 percent of Mid-Staffs staff said they would be happy to be treated in their own hospital – a powerful indication that standards were unacceptable. And after Bristol, the General Medical Council deemed that doctors have a duty to speak up when the service becomes so unsafe that patients are being harmed.

However, the experience of Dr Rita Pal in nearby North Staffs suggests that whistle-blowing in the NHS remains a thankless task.

Dr Pal identified serious shortcomings in the nursing and medical care of patients on ward 87 of City General hospital, Stoke on Trent, when she started working there in August 1998. These included a lack of basic equipment such as drip sets, a lack of adequate support and supervision for junior doctors, a gross shortage of staff and repeated "do not resuscitate" notices. As a result, patient care was often poor, with a lack of baseline observations and routine blood tests, and there appeared to be an unacceptably high mortality rate.

In November 1998, Dr Pal articulated these concerns to senior nursing and medical staff, and put them in writing. As a result, she was bullied and victimised. She was wrongly accused of causing a needle-stick injury and inserting the wrong date on a drug sheet, and she found out that her previous consultant had been contacted to ascertain whether she was "capable of doing the job" (ie flying by the seat of her pants with inadequate support and resources, surrounded by hostile nurses and patients dying unnecessarily). She requested leave because she (quite reasonably) felt unable to care for patients in this environment.

Subsequent investigation found Dr Pal's allegations had been spot-on. A review in May 1999 by Mrs T Fenech from the Infectious Diseases Unit found "serious deficiencies in nursing practice" and that "the level of care demonstrated for some patients on the ward at the time of my audit was nothing short of negligent". In 2001, an internal report concluded that the directorate failed to take appropriate action when the allegations were made by Dr Pal, and that patients had suffered from poor standards of care. And in March 2002 the Commission for Health Improvement still found "serious deficiencies", particularly with "the level of supervision, workload and work patterns of junior doctors working within medicine".

So not only were Dr Pal's allegations accurate, but four years later very little had been done to address them. Dr Pal took her concerns to the GMC and – 11 years after first raising concerns – is still embroiled in a fight to ascertain the extent of the harm done to patients on ward 87. A mature and safety-conscious NHS would have thanked her for raising concerns to help improve patient care and acted on them. Instead, she has been bullied, falsely accused of malpractice and repeatedly denied access to key documents to help support her case.

Last week, Sir Ian Kennedy, retiring chair of the Healthcare Commission, spoke of the bullying culture in the NHS that still "permeates the delivery of care". Those who are brave enough to speak up about deficiencies are being pilloried and silenced. In such an environment, patient safety can never flourish. Dr Pal has lobbied (via her MP, Andrew Mitchell) for the Commons health select committee to investigate the problems faced by whistleblowers in the NHS. She has also started a support network for whistleblowers and can be contacted at dr.ritapal@googlemail.com.

M.D.

Lift going down

HEALTH minister Ben Bradshaw has a cunning plan to save the NHS. Last month he announced a scheme to hand GPs' surgeries and local clinics to Barclays, Allied Irish Bank and other financial institutions. Despite the evidence of the financial crisis, he still thinks bankers know best.

Bradshaw's plan, known as "Express LIFT", hides behind a blizzard of initials, acronyms and blandly named consortia but essentially means pushing a stalled plan to hand local health premises to bankers for redevelopment in 25-year contracts.

"Local Improvement Finance Trusts" are a variation on the PFI in which builders and bankers get contracts to build health premises, charging the NHS high rates over a quarter of a century. The companies get a monopoly on building throughout primary care trust areas as an incentive to refurbish surgeries and clinics.

In a slight variation from the PFI, LIFTs leave a little equity – around 20 percent – in NHS hands. However, this has not persuaded enough trusts to begin complex negotiations with financiers. So ministers designed Express LIFT, where companies would be pre-approved nationally by the Department of Health. Bradshaw said it would "enable more primary care trusts and local authorities to take advantage of its benefits".

Many of the LIFT companies are fronted by former NHS managers but are essentially backed by shaky financial institutions. "Community Solutions for Primary Care", one of the pre-approved partners, is half owned by Barclays. Another partner, Odyssey Healthcare, is fronted by Sir William Wells, who has many years' experience as a hospital director and a seat on the NHS Commercial Advisory Board advising on privatisation. However, his firm is heavily backed by finance house Babcock & Brown, which went into administration last month.

Another partner pushed through Express LIFT, Fulcrum, brought in Alasdair Liddell, former NHS director of planning, as its boss. Behind Liddell, the LIFT investments come from Allied Irish Bank, which depends on a massive bail-out from the Irish government.

The banks' difficulties are likely to increase the cost of their investments, making them even more of a long-term financial burden for local NHS trusts.

Cheque-ups

HEALTH secretary Alan Johnson's announcement that everybody over 40 will be given free health checks for heart, kidney and other diseases was good news for chemists.

Johnson insisted that some of the check-ups would be carried out in pharmacies as well as at GPs' surgeries, a promise which will have been cheered by firms like Boots and Lloyds the Chemists. As the NHS estimates the cost of the tests at between £7 and £29 each, and as it expects to make 3m check-ups a year, this is potentially big business in a recession.

The check-ups could also lead to lucrative marketing opportunities for the pharmacies. For example, if the NHS tells someone aged over 40 to consult a "health care assistant" at a local chemist, sales of weight loss, anti-smoking and other "healthy living" products triggered by the test would effectively gain NHS backing.

While pharmacists are keen to grab this new business, primary care trusts would prefer GPs and walk-in clinics to carry out the checks instead. But Johnson remains committed to directing NHS work towards the high street – music to the ears to two of his "new" Labour predecessors. Former health secretary Patricia Hewitt is now a £45,000-a-year "special consultant" to Alliance Boots, while Alan Milburn earns £25,000 a year on the Lloyds Healthcare Advisory Panel. No doubt Tony Blair's former chief of staff and cabinet minister Sally Morgan also approves of Johnson's move. She too sits on the Lloyds panel.

Visiting time

DESPITE Lord Laming's report, in the wake of the death of Baby P, describing the role of health visitors as "crucially important" to child protection, the message seems not to have reached the London borough of Hounslow.

In 2007, *Eye* 1192 reported how, despite a rising birth rate, the number of health visitors in Hounslow had fallen from 37 in 2001 to just 18. At the time, the Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association (CPHVA) said that high workloads left remaining staff teetering on the edge of "dangerous practice".

Lord Laming's "progress report", published last month, declares: "A robust health visiting service delivered by highly trained skilled professionals who are alert to potentially vulnerable children can save lives. Despite this, the number of health visitors has dropped by 10 percent in the last three years and caseloads are significantly higher than the recommended 300 families or 400 children, with 40 percent of health visitors handling caseloads of over 500 children and 20 percent over 1,000 children."

Hounslow needs a minimum of 33 health visitors to meet the recommended caseloads. So how many does it have now? Just 15.

"I never really thought about it, I just assumed he'd get a job and find a place to live. But now with the recession..."

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

MARK MY WORDS

SENIOR managers at Doncaster council were warned four years ago that the reorganisation of the town's children's services department by former managing director Susan Law (*Eyes passim*) would put children at risk.

Mark Eales, the council's former director of education and culture, wrote to Ms Law in January 2005 that her plan to "tear down the barriers between different council departments and different layers of management" would lead to a muddled structure and unclear lines of responsibility. The council's ability to protect vulnerable children would be weakened, said Eales – who also prophesied that the ensuing chaos could lead to government intervention. The council's children's services department was taken over by the Department for Children, Schools and Families last month.

Eales's warning was not acted on. Nor did a further internal report, written in 2007 by the council's former head of children and family services, Bron Sanders, appear to have much impact. Ms Sanders warned that the social services in the borough were chaotic and that the management reorganisation had been "unworkable and unsafe". She wrote: "The needs of looked-after children are neglected whenever they are not in crisis."

The council's current managing director, Paul Hart, was "interim" MD at the time. Six "at risk" children died in Doncaster after Eales wrote to Law, including two whose fathers have subsequently been convicted of murder. Neither the Eales nor the Sanders reports was shown to councillors. Both were kept secret until they were leaked to the *Doncaster Free Press* last month.

Law, now chief executive at Wokingham council in Berkshire, was clearly too preoccupied by her blue-sky management revolution and her squabbles with the town's useless elected mayor, Martin Winter, to take any notice of things she did not want to hear. Although perhaps she did. After writing his prophetic report, Eales was sidelined into an education standards role before taking early retirement the following year.

PS The bonkers nature of Law's management theories is revealed by the fact that the man recruited to run children's services in 2005, Mark Hodson, had no experience of social services or of working in local authorities. He left the council in 2007. A former manager for Asda, he was headhunted from a frozen-food firm and had previously worked for Geest. At least his experience of working for a bananas company would have come in useful when he moved to Doncaster.

● *Special Schools, p.29*

● VOTE Conservative, the Tories told the people of Northamptonshire at the local elections, because they have "experience in running businesses and employing people".

Such experience was invaluable when it came to recruiting Paul Morrissey as a £12,000-a-month deputy head of legal services for Northants county council last year. Only, for some inexplicable reason, no one asked him if he was actually a qualified solicitor. If they had done, there was an outside chance he might have told the truth and replied: "Well, er, actually no."

That £12,000 a month was evidently not enough for the legal ace, because he invoiced twice for work he'd done in August. It was only then the penny dropped that something might be wrong, and Morrissey was fired. With considerable chutzpah, he then sued for unfair dismissal.

The ensuing tribunal found in favour of the council – but only then did it come to light that Morrissey had landed his high-powered job without any legal qualification. Whoops! Although in a council that splashed out £32.7m on consultants between 2005 and 2008, bunging £12,000 a month to a conman is just a drop in the ocean.

The £20million development (£7m from the Arts Council, £13 from Bristol City Council) will have a café-bar and restaurant

Metro (on the new Colston Hall)

CHIPS WITH EVERYTHING

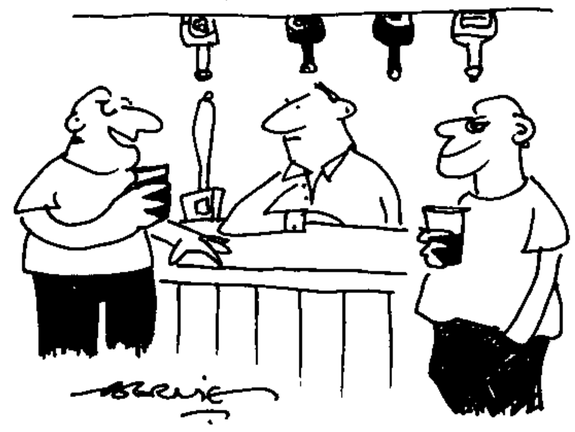
MORE on the bizarre workings of the planning process in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, where applicants have discovered that even a judicial review is no bar to success – all you have to do is pop in a "new" application and councillors will wave it through.

Eye 1233 reported on how a new application had been submitted for a scheme consisting of 200 flats and a Tesco Metro store, previously approved without an environmental impact assessment, as a way of sidestepping a judicial review into that omission. A similar dodge has now been used to ensure that an application to change the use of a shop in Cable Street to a fast-food joint gets through. On 1 April the application was passed at the third attempt – the first having been rejected by the committee and the second passed but quashed by a judicial review.

Why should Tower Hamlets' Labour councillors look so kindly upon the applicant, a Mr T Miah? The start of the committee meeting which passed his application was delayed by 15 minutes because Mr Miah was late – a courtesy not extended to other applicants.

Another curiosity is that the case appears to raise two fingers to the council's own "healthy eating" policy and that of Labour's prospective parliamentary candidate for Bethnal Green and Bow, Rushanara Ali. Ms Ali has pledged to work with Tower Hamlets, if elected, to stop fast-food joints being given planning permission within 400 metres of schools. Yet Mr Miah's takeaway will be within this distance of four schools, and the police had objected to it on the grounds that it might cause antisocial behaviour and traffic problems.

Perhaps he only intends to sell healthy salads and lentil burgers to da yoof of Tower Hamlets.



"It's such a lovely evening, why don't we go outside for a fight?"

TOWERS OF LONDON

WHEN Hazel Blears backed a planning inquiry decision last month to allow a bunch of skyscrapers to be built south of Blackfriars Bridge, London mayor Boris Johnson was quick to condemn the communities secretary.

He accused Blears of "developing a worrying appetite" for intervening in decisions he believes are best left to "the London authorities". Since the towers had been approved by Southwark council, one must assume that by "the London authorities" he meant "Boris Johnson".

Bozo's record on the subject of towers is inconsistent, to say the least. Before the election he made it clear that, as mayor, he would oppose all towers outside central London. He also said he would fight towers which interfere with historic views.

Once in office, however, he immediately failed to oppose the Doon Street tower on the South Bank, which English Heritage says will ruin important City views. He then turned and backed a tower in Ealing which he had previously singled out for criticism, and failed to oppose an application to raise the height of another City tower, the hideous "Walkie Talkie".

In July last year he attacked three view-wrecking towers at Waterloo station, dubbed the "three ugly sisters" – but then endorsed them in October, giving no reason for his change of mind.

None of this has been lost on Boris's predecessor. "Boris has agreed all the towers I would have – and then some," Ken Livingstone tells *Building Design* magazine. "For all the noise about him being opposed to tall buildings in the election, he's been less restrictive than I would have been." For once, Red Ken is right.

PARK STRIFE

COUNCILS are increasingly jumping aboard a stupid bandwagon. Parks cost money; parks are expensive to maintain. Therefore it makes sense to sell off part of the park. Money in the bank and less boring parkland to look after. Brilliant!

In London, **Hounslow** council has just given support "in principle" to GlaxoSmithKline's offer to create 600 parking spaces in Boston Manor Park in return for paying for a bit of maintenance in the rest of the park, while **Bromley** council has approved plans to build nearly 200 luxury homes within Crystal Palace park. London mayor Boris Johnson has approved the proposals, despite his manifesto commitment last year to protect green space.

Outside the capital **Bournemouth** council has approved plans to sell off 18 green spaces for housing development. **Torbay** is selling off £1.5m of "underused" green spaces and has earmarked another 60 sites for development. **Bristol** is selling more than 14 hectares of its parks to housing developers. "Improvements will be made to backland sites by introducing housing fronting the site," says its "Parks and Green Space Strategy" (translation: "We will build houses around and within the edge of the park"). Will the money be used to benefit other local parks? "This won't always be the case" (translation: "No").

The questionnaire accompanying Bristol's "consultation" requested details of religion, sexual orientation and – crucially – "Do you consider yourself to be transgender?" Do Sikh transgendered people use parks differently from Christian heterosexuals? Perhaps in Bristol they do.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON KNIFE & PACKER

OF COURSE MODERN MUSIC TECHNOLOGY HAS OVERTAKEN HUMBLE VINYL
BUT BUYING MP3 FILES HAS NONE OF THE FUN OF RUMMAGING AROUND A PROPER OLD STYLE RECORD SHOP... HIDDEN GEMS, RARE REMIXES, DAZZLING ARTWORK...
JAZZ
Echo & The Bunnymen
Top of the POPS
THESE WILL MAKE THE MOST FABULOUSLY QUIRKY PLACEMATS AT OUR NEXT SOIREE!
AND LOOK! THE SMITHS' SEMINAL ALBUM 'MEAT IS MURDER' – THE PERFECT ADJUNCT TO YOUR VEGETARIAN BOUILLABAISSE...
JAZZ
THE ASSOCIATES

NOOKS and CORNERS

THIS column doesn't normally plug books, but here is a welcome new publication which addresses the steady attrition of historic, handsome, serviceable but poorly maintained swimming pools.

Published by English Heritage, *Great Lengths: The historic indoor swimming pools of Britain* by Ian Gordon & Simon Inglis ought to be widely read – not least by the local councillors who decline to sustain these public facilities. As the authors put it: "This is a study of buildings that are functional, that are robust, that give great pleasure and health benefits (physical and mental) to our communities, that are part of our social and cultural heritage, and that, above all, are often quite stunning in appearance.

Great Lengths

"They are buildings for which, quite literally, local authorities, architects and engineers, builders and craftsmen, manufacturers and designers, and most importantly of all, the ratepayers of Britain, have gone to great lengths to procure." And now so many are being closed – despite the government's concern about national health, exercise and obesity.

The book has a directory of 288 pool buildings dating from before 1945 – 116 of which are listed. Of these 288, exactly half are still wholly or partially in use (and of these, 117 are in the public sector). Another interesting statistic is that over a quarter of swimming pools built in the 1960s have already been demolished while a higher proportion of Victorian or Edwardian pools has enjoyed a much longer life span – often of up to a century. "During the late 19th and early 20th centuries," say the authors, "baths were built so robustly and using such high quality materials that – interludes of inadequate maintenance and under-funding notwithstanding – they have endured extremely well." So why aren't they maintained today, rather than replaced (if at all) by tawdry new structures?

Among many well-illustrated case studies is that of the Haggerston Baths, a handsome structure of 1904 by the specialist architect A.W.S. Cross. This was suddenly closed by Hackney council in 2000 – ostensibly on health and safety grounds but really because the construction of the wretched new Clissold Baths was hugely late and over budget (*Eyes* 1114 and 1156). Other case studies are of fine historic pools that have figured in this column, such as Moseley Road Baths in Birmingham (*Eye* 1198) and the Ripon Spa Baths (*Eye* 1209). Two are of what are now the two oldest working pools in London, both now owned by the London borough of Southwark: the Dulwich Public Baths and Camberwell Baths (both by Spalding & Cross architects, and opened in 1892). The good news is that the former is now being revamped while a large government grant (£1.45m) towards free swimming for the under-16s and over-60s will enable the latter to be restored – if Southwark matches the outlay.

How sad, then, that councillors in nearby Lewisham are not so enlightened. Until 2006 when it was abruptly closed after decades of poor maintenance, the oldest working pool in London was at Forest Hill (*Eye* 1156). This followed the closure of the magnificent contemporary (and listed) Ladywell Baths in Lewisham. Since then, the Sydenham Society in particular has fought for the Forest Hill pool to be reopened, but the blinkered mayor of Lewisham, Sir Steve Bullock, is determined this historic building will be destroyed. A petition organised by the society showed overwhelming support for maintaining a swimming pool on the site and retaining the 1880s frontage building, but Lewisham council wants to build a new pool on another site as part of a housing development. Why? Because they think it's cheaper. Commonsense suggests a big element of cost with a pool is the large hole in the ground, and that to fill one in and dig another is a waste of money. Perhaps Sir Steve might learn something from a brief perusal of *Great Lengths*?

IN Eye 1223 I described how Bolton Council had begun to demolish a former Board School, later Clarence Street Community College, after unlawfully granting itself consent. The handsome building was to be replaced by a temporary car park, although a report – commissioned by the same council – had identified the school building as a local landmark, "worthy of retention".

Last October SAVE Britain's Heritage won an injunction to halt demolition. It also pointed out that not only was the building eminently suitable for re-use, but also that the cost of scaffolding the building was not £350,000 as the council had claimed but £80,000. But councillors were set on destruction and the planning committee has now voted to continue with demolition, on economic grounds.

SAVE says: "By using the part destruction of the building as a reason for its total demolition we believe the council has taken advantage of its own unlawful behaviour – the grossly inflated scaffolding costs providing further evidence of a dismissive attitude to historic buildings in its care."

How sad that in the dying days of "new" Labour, the two most threatened categories of historic building in Britain today are Board schools and swimming pools – products of a once enlightened attitude to public services and architecture.

● **Triumph, Disaster and Decay: The SAVE survey of Liverpool's Heritage** is on show at 6 Playhouse Court, 62 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 OAT from 16 April to 1 May.

'Piloti'

I-SPY

Submitted by Steve Waldie. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs)*

"IN MY long career as an architect, this is one of the saddest days," says the architect Lord Rogers, sacking 25 percent of his staff while changing the partnership's supposedly unalterable constitution to keep his income and lavish lifestyle unchanged in spite of the recession. "The economic downturn we are experiencing is the most ruthless and wide-ranging I can remember and it is impossible for us to be immune from its effects."

The use of the pronoun "us" seems puzzling, for one man who'll be more immune than most is Lord Rogers. His annual take from the architectural practice is £2m; he has a Chelsea house valued at £12m and another in Wimbledon worth about £3m; he and his wife own 59.5 percent of the River Café, which makes annual profits of well over £1m; just over a year ago he earned £6m after tax from the sale of his interests in the Hammersmith properties that house both the café and his practice; and his private art collection is worth somewhere between £17m and £20m.

Last year, as we reported in *Eye* 1212, Rogers protested noisily at being included in the *Sunday Times* Rich List, and forced the paper to remove him from the online version of the list. Will the *Sunday Times* now compound his misery by putting him back in?

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

MORE gloomy news from the recession front: the British piano industry looks finally dead and buried, bringing to a close nearly three centuries of history.

In 1900 there were 360 British piano manufacturers turning out instruments for a public that couldn't get enough of them. A hundred years later it was down to two. Then, when Broadwood collapsed in 2003, along with its associate brands Knight and Bentley, it was one. And now the sole survivor, Kemble, is about to go.

Essentially still a family company in Milton Keynes run by Brian Kemble, grandson of the founder, it may not make the most distinguished pianos in the world – you won't find Kembles at Carnegie Hall or the Musikverein – but it's been making perfectly good instruments for home use since 1911, prepared with British craftsmanship of which the company is proud.

But that pervasive international juggernaut of the piano business, Yamaha, bought into Kemble several years ago – part of a world domination plan that also sucked in Bösendorfer, one of Austria's iconic national companies. Yamaha owns more than 90 percent of Kemble's shares, giving it the power to close the company down – and that's exactly what it's going to do unless a 7th Cavalry appears on the horizon.

With falling sales and profits, Kemble isn't any shareholder's delight, and Yamaha isn't sentimental. But to close the last British piano company would be cruel. Will no one out there intervene?

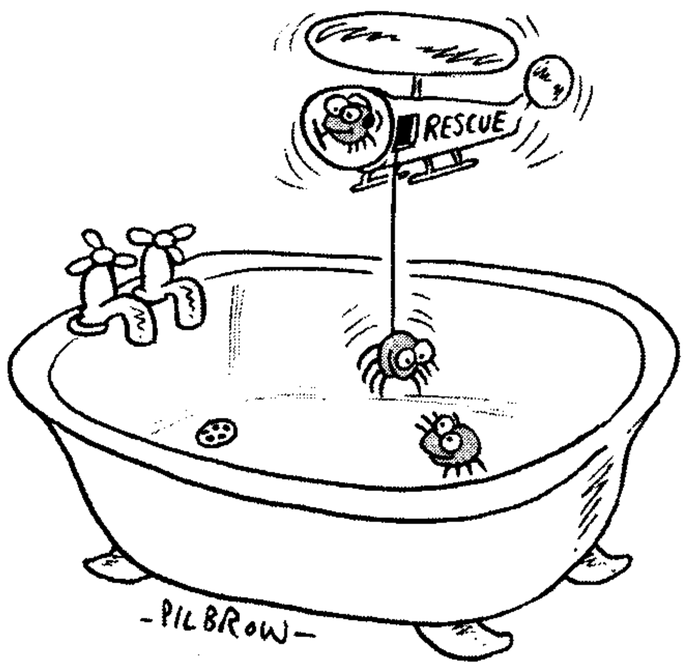
'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

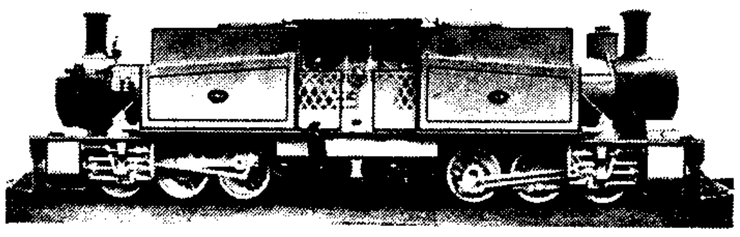
BY BIRCH

It's good to know that artists were doing provocative conceptual stuff way before we did.
TATE MODERN RECREATES NOTORIOUS 1971 INTERACTIVE INSTALLATION
ARCHIVE PHOTO
"PEOPLE WENT MAD!"
Isn't it?

THE SUNDAY TIMES TICKET PACKAGES
Skakespeare's Globe
Performance and Exhibition
Sunday Times



SIGNAL FAILURES



Vending the rules

ENCOURAGING passengers to overcharge themselves could help train firms beat the recession.

Companies that are keen to cut ticket-office staff to save money say passengers can use ticket-vending machines instead. But those machines don't offer the complete range of fares. A human ticket clerk should point out if buying a railcard would cut a journey's total cost, but a vending machine won't. For example, a ticket from A to B could cost more than tickets from A to C and C to B, but vending machines at A (unlike clerks) can't sell tickets from C.

Given the choice, many passengers prefer to buy from clerks, even if there is a queue; their confidence in vending machines undermined by the complexity of fares. Buying the cheapest fare from a human can take a minute or longer, as each possibility is explored; but with so many complications, more staff are needed, not fewer.

Last year a passenger asked South West Trains to publish a tutorial leaflet to help people use its vending machines. SWT said it was testing such a leaflet: "The difficulty is deciding how much information to give, as we could end up with a book rather than a leaflet." If it would take a book to explain how to use a machine, mistakes are inevitable.

Although the rail industry is honour-bound to be more lenient towards passengers who are inadvertently travelling on an incorrect ticket, the opposite is happening. A SWT leaflet warned passengers: "Some people make costly mistakes about ticket types when they travel on our trains. Having an invalid ticket counts as having no ticket at all."

British Rail used to levy an "excess" for underpayment (the difference between the correct fare and the fare paid); but today the correct fare may be demanded in full with train firms pocketing the amount already paid, effectively as a fine.

Train firms also squeeze more cash from passengers by misleading them about which tickets are valid at what time of day. Many journeys can be made at peak times using price-regulated tickets, formerly known as Saver and Cheap Day, which were cunningly renamed "off-peak" in last year's "fares simplification". Many people will be fooled by the "off-peak" name and needlessly buy unregulated (ie dearer) "anytime" tickets. Others will be unsure whether the old restrictions still apply. If the ticket office is shut, or the lone clerk is a long queue away, buying "anytime" tickets at the vending machine is the safest (but more expensive) way to avoid the risk of being treated as a petty fraudster.

'Dr B Ching'

Letters

Private Eye

Hit and pissed

Sir,

I hope that your readers will watch Nick Cohen's Orwell Prize outburst – and my riposte to it – on YouTube. They will then be able to see if your account of the event (Eye 1233) accurately captured the spirit of the occasion.

On the same site, they can also view a recording of my attack on the previous year's Orwell Prize jury, when I objected to their decision to short-list Alastair Campbell's diaries. Oddly enough, neither you nor anyone else reported this protest at the time, though the room was full of journalists. Perhaps this was because – in the view of the conformist media pack to which Private Eye now belongs – I am one of those people who are so wicked that nothing they do can ever be right, even though it would be if someone else did it.

As it happens I agree with Nick Cohen that Martin Bright should have been on the Orwell short-list this year. But Nick Cohen was wrong to couple his protest with personal attacks on me and Peter Oborne, and particularly wrong to say that we take no risks. I suspect he doesn't read what I write, or know what I do.

PETER HITCHENS,

Mail on Sunday, London W8.

Esther rant

Sir,

Re my daughter's work in schools (Street of Shame, Eye 1233).

The charity Spirituality for Kids is non-denominational, non-religious, and has been evaluated as appropriate and valuable for children whatever their religious or cultural background. Since I personally do not share the beliefs of Kabbalah, I would not endorse SFK if it were, as you claim, "the children's wing of the Kabbalah Centre". However, it is not. Rather, it teaches young people, some of whom attend challenging and difficult inner city schools, the values of self restraint, altruism and self discipline, and having seen the results I am delighted that my daughter is working for them.

I understand that the charity began from and is supported by the Kabbalah Centre, just as NCH Action for Children was created by Methodists and The Children's Society by the Church of England.

Many of our leading charities were created by people from a faith background. This does not detract from SFK's excellent work helping children.

Yours sincerely,
ESTHER RANTZEN,

Via email.

Honest to goodness?

Sir,

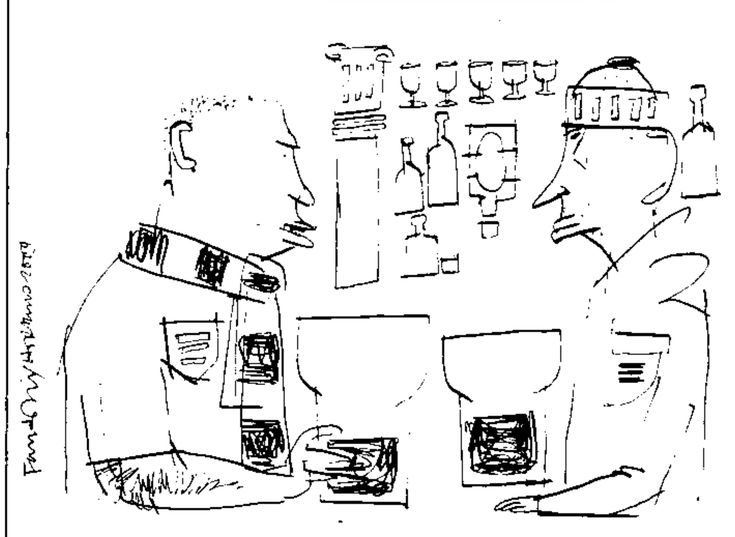
Homeopaths are bored with critics who question their honesty and then produce good porkies themselves. J.N. Shah (Letters, Eye 1233) writes that Peter Chappell was keynote speaker at the Society of Homeopaths AIDS symposium in 2007. He was not. I was there, in the audience, as was Peter Chappell.

He did not speak. I have not checked the other facts in Mr Shah's letter. Antiretrovirals are the only effective treatment for AIDs.

Yours sincerely,
NOEL THOMAS,

Maesteg.

Scenes You Seldom See



"Without a doubt, the ref had a brilliant game and we were beaten by a better team"

Home thoughts

Sir,

Surgeon Rear-Admiral Mike Farquharson-Roberts' claim (Letters, Eye, 1231) that the Royal Star and Garter Home on Richmond Hill can no longer provide dementia care and care for younger disabled Service personnel might carry greater weight if the governors had been prepared to share the justification for such a view with the local community over the last five years.

Since the proposed running-down and closure of the Home on the Hill, with its unrivalled amenities and facilities, was first announced in January 2004, the governors have failed to make public details of the architects, "heritage consultants", cost consultants and others who undertook the "detailed studies"; when they were appointed; when they reported; and the brief they were given; in response to the questions raised locally about the future of the Home.

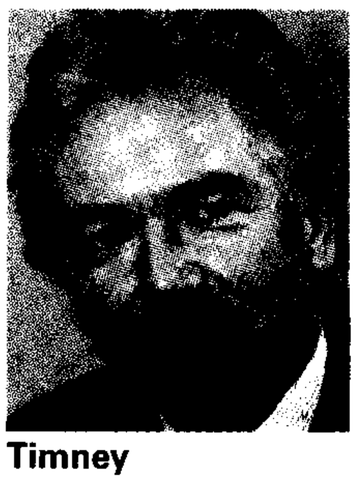
Mike Farquharson-Roberts also claims that the Royal Star and Garter Home is not now and never has been a war memorial. Such a view runs counter to the clear statement made in the RSGH's own 90th anniversary publication that "the 'new' home was built after the war, and opened by King George V and Queen Mary on the 10th July 1924, [when it] was officially named the British Women's War Memorial to the combatants of the Great War".

Until otherwise demonstrated to be unrealistic and unrealisable, the further modernisation and upgrading of the Home on the Hill, must surely remain on the agenda.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL VELLUET,

Twickenham.

Lookalike



Timney

Edmonds

Sir,

On seeing your front cover last issue, I was struck by the resemblance between that man who "isn't a banker" to the man whose imbecilic TV programme Deal Or No Deal features a "banker with a chilling laugh". Surely they must be related?

Yours,
ENA B. FARRIMOND,

Soho.

Pedantry Corner

... Fascinated by the "Number Crunching" carbon emissions comparison of an Aga with a Formula One car (Eye 1233), I'm looking forward to learning how much carbon is locked up in a single chalk deposit (say the South Downs) compared with a single cheese.

NIGEL D'AUVERGNE.

... In Eye-TV (p8, 1233) 'Remote Controller' suggests that Sir Alan should give the winner of The Apprentice's wage to charity - one hundred thousand grand he says it is. However we all know the winner of The Apprentice gets one hundred grand and not one hundred thousand grand (one hundred million). Who said that maths standards were slipping?

JOE RYDING.

... 'Ratbiter' is incorrect in his reading of constitutional law (Eye 1233), though he may be forgiven as there is an awful lot of it. Indeed, a dissolution of Parliament is required within five years of the previous one, but a general election does not have to be held until at the latest, three years after that. In the meantime no legislation can be passed, and after the first twelve months, no taxes may be levied. That could be one way of encouraging people to pump their dosh into the economy!

ANDY GARDNER.

... Re your item on Sir Fred Goodwin (p3, Eye 1233). 602 Squadron is RAuxAF (Royal Auxiliary Air Force), not RAAF (Royal Australian Air Force).

JOHN MUTER.

... Regarding the I-Spy (p14, Eye 1233), it's not Goring in Sussex that has an unstable bank – it's Goring on Thames in Oxfordshire. The river bank has fallen apart.

SA'ID B'STARD.

... Must take issue with the Number Crunching regarding the proposal to allow the heir to the throne to marry a Catholic (Eye 1233). First of all, the law which applies to the British monarchy was not passed 308 years ago but 301 years ago. The Act of Settlement (1701) applied only to the English monarchy. The British monarchy was created in 1707, when the parliaments of Scotland and England passed the Anglo-Scottish treaty of union, which adopted the English Act of Settlement into British Law thus superseding the statute of 1701 which did not apply in Scotland.

More importantly, however, we don't elect our prime ministers per se and your suggestion that there is something undemocratic about Gordon Brown becoming prime minister between general elections is nonsense and feeds the unhealthy presidentialisation of the [Sadly this letter had to be cut for reasons of boredom. Ed.]

ALAN MACDONALD.

Lookalike

Schubert

Keating

Sir,

I wonder if anyone has noticed the similarity between the fresh-faced Irish musical genius Ronan Keating and the fresh-faced German musical genius Franz Schubert?

Yours,
SAM ARCHER,

Via email.

Jam insights

Sir,

In Books and Bookmen (Eye 1232) you invited readers to conclude that Sense About Science had removed the name of Dr Andrew Cockburn from additional contributors to "Making Sense of GM" for some untoward reason.

He was not a part of the working group but someone we sought additional contributions from. In his case, one of a handful who we lined up to look through the document once it was drafted. Pre-empting this, his name was added to the draft. We circulated that draft nearly three weeks later than we'd hoped to, as is so often the way. It turned out that he was away and so we received no comments from him. If we had, we'd have been happy to include him – why wouldn't we?

It appears to be some years since he left Monsanto and, with the difficulties of working out how particular technologies were developed, he might have been able to provide interesting insights.

We were sorry he couldn't

DR LEONOR SIERRA

Scientific Liaison, Sense About Science, London W1.

Bad Ms take

Sir,

As a publication which frequently castigates the British media for its gutter sexism and appalling attitude to women, I was disappointed to see the Eye descending to tabloid level by labelling the female contestants of The Apprentice "slappers".

There are plenty of reasons to dislike the 12 vacuous, money-grubbing, deluded individuals competing to be Sir Alan Sugar's next dancing monkey without reverting to the type of cheap, misogynistic terms bandied about by the Sun and co. Unless, of course, you're prepared to cast aspersions on the promiscuity levels of the male contestants too? Didn't think so.

Let's just agree that all the contestants, male and female, are walking billboards for arrogance, naivety and a complete lack of self-awareness, and leave out the gendered attacks, shall we?

Yours sincerely,
CATHERINE SCOTT (Ms),

Dunstable, Bedfordshire.

Bryn and bear it

Sir,

I am grateful to Bookworm for drawing attention to the appearance in paperback of my book "The Secret of Bryn Estyn: The Making of a Modern Witch Hunt" (Eye 1231). But sometimes ironies are folded so intricately into the Eye's pronouncements they make even origami seem simple. I hope I will be permitted to clarify matters.

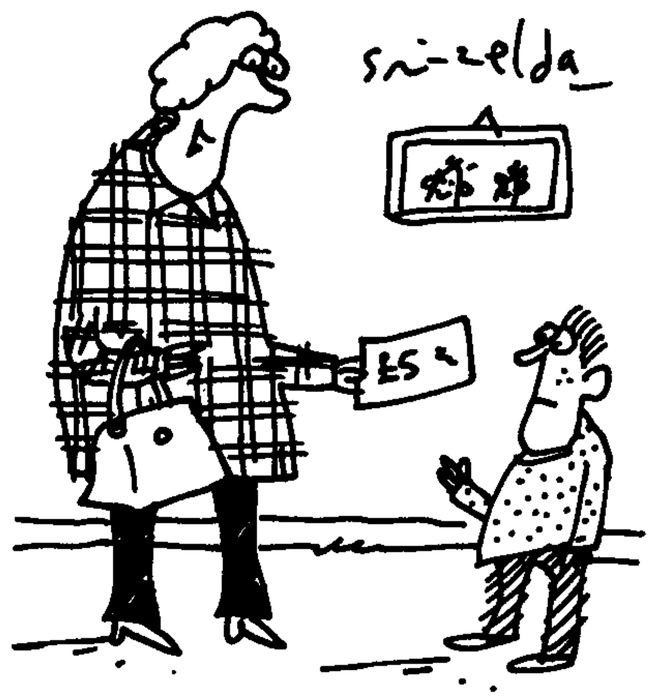
While it is true that my new postscript is severely critical of the role played by the press in the children's home scandals in North Wales and in Jersey, it also gives credit where credit is due. I note that many of the distinguished journalists who were involved in the coverage of the North Wales story during the 1990s, including Ian Jack, David Rose and Peter Wilby, have now made the difficult acknowledgment that they got the story wrong.

The editor of Private Eye has also conveyed misgivings about his coverage of the story, doing so through a series of brief articles (and letters) published in the Eye in 2005 in response to the publication of "The Secret of Bryn Estyn".

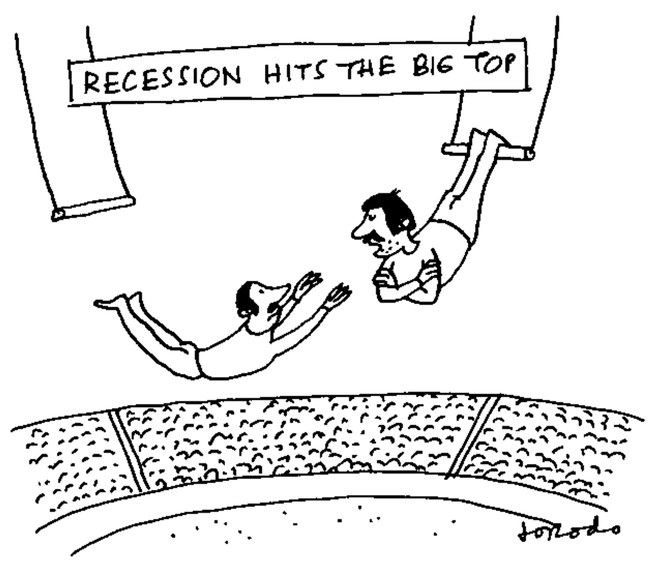
RICHARD WEBSTER,

Oxford.

Cartoon Crunch



"Here's a little something for your future tax bills!"



"I'm sorry – we're going to have to let you go"

"In these tough times we're making sacrifices – the Romanian au pair now makes all the children's clothes"

Pseudo Names

... You should not be browbeaten into ending your Pseudo Names feature by threats from your correspondent G. Hadd. People like that should be locked up.

JUAN TANAMO.

... Re the Editor's suggestion in response to Mr G. Hadd's letter to end this correspondence. Should this occur, then it may well lead to further troubles.

CHRISTIAN UPRISING.

... The economy of the civilised world is wrecked and you expect us to make up silly names!

D. KLEINOFF
D. WEST.

... We would just like to say how disappointed we are that you have decided to close the correspondence on Pseudo Names (probably).

MAUREEN SORROW
DAN INANGER.

... Instead of making up silly names, why don't your contributors read a good book?

WARREN PEACE.

... Instead of producing a book of pseudonyms, could you not distribute something more lightweight?

PAM FLETT.

... I do hope that this nonsense fizzles out before the summer.

BARBIE KEW.

... Do you think it can be true that scientists have discovered a genetic link between the Scots and the native North American Mohican nation?

HAWKEYE THENOO.

... The Pseudo Names section of your organ just confirms for me that your magazine is going to the dogs!

JACK RUSSELL (Rev.)
Barking.

... I see that the editor is yet again calling a halt to this most valuable feature. Huge sadness is upon me. Even my faithful friend has noticed this and nuzzles me in support. Please think again Ed!

MEL & COLLIE.

... I just love Pseudo Names – it's wonderful. I also love Medicine Balls; Nooks And Corners; Down On The Farm; Signal Failures; Lookalikes; In The Back; the crossword; the cartoons; the classifieds. In fact I love it all.

POLLY AMOROUS.

... Please do not cancel Pseudo Names, it is my reason for living.

RAY ZONDETTE.

... So you have tried to bring the Pseudo Names correspondence to a close. We, the undersigned, think there may be trouble ahead.

BERT WEILL
DES MUHNLEIT
ANNE MÜSICH
ANN LOVE
ANDREW MANSE
LES FACE
DEE MÜSICH
ANNE DANCE.

... I can't help feeling that some of the Pseudo Names have not been easy to translate. I'd be glad to help with this if required.

ROSETTA STONE.

... Thank you for putting an end to the Pseudo Names correspondence. We've always admired your ability to stop repeating a joke before it gets dull. But we're worried that you might not be able to fill up your letters page now. Do you have any ideas on what you could publish?

ANNE DREW
NEIL INAVEST.

Jury disservice

Sir,

Of course the Eye likes to recycle gossip about anyone who puts their head over the parapet (Sir Paul Judge, Man In The Eye, 1232) but the Jury Team is not about its founder, it's about the platform it provides for independently minded people to get involved in politics. If you look at the list of those who have put themselves forward as potential Jury Team candidates they are by and large middle-aged people who have worked in the real world, are interested in community issues and are so unhappy about the current state of British politics that they are willing to do something about it. Many of your readers fit that description.

Regards,
NICK THOMPSON,
Via email.

Lookalike

Kraftwerk

Eye team

Sir,

Now that Private Eye has entered the world of digital audio with its eyePlayer, I was struck by the similarity of the Eye's group of ageing entertainers to that other ageing digital performance act, Kraftwerk.

Yours,
DOUG LEITH,
Aberdeen.

Commander Bob Broadhurst, in charge of the operation, said his aim was to facilitate peaceful protest. But those peaceful demonstrators caught inside the cordon with no toilet facilities, and little water, questioned the idea that they were being allowed to exercise their right to march.

"The police should let us dribble out when we need to," said June Rogers,

Grauniad

SOS SOAS

Sir,

Although 'Ratbiter' (Double-Dutch Standards, Eye 1232) mistakenly refers to SOAS as the School of Oriental and Asian Studies (it is, in fact, the School of Organized Anti-Semitism, better known as the School of Oriental and African Studies), he is correct to point out the customary double-standards at the institution.

Compare the invitation to Hezbollah's Ibrahim Moussawi to deliver lectures on "political Islam" (ie: Jews did 9/11) with the recent motion passed by the Student Union to boycott Israeli academic institutions. (Ironically, the same Union General Meeting (UGM) also contained a motion to "Stop the BNP: No Platform for Fascists", which was passed unanimously.)

Yours faithfully,
NAME & ADDRESS WITHHELD.

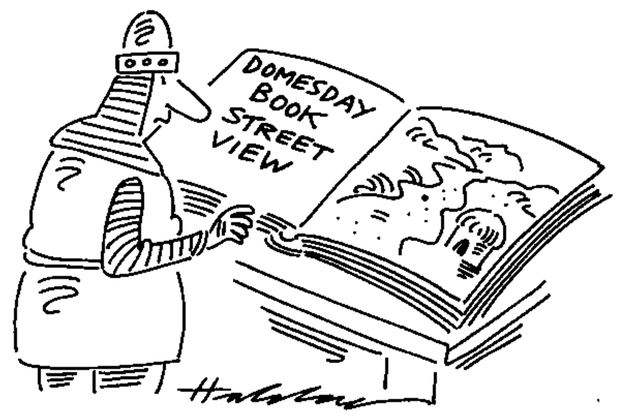
THE EDITOR was appalled by the large number of extremely crude entries from readers attempting to find humour in sexual or lavatorial double entendres concerning items being discovered in the bath. Almost as bad were the readers who appeared to be advocating the introduction of an electric toaster into the water.

None of these submissions was deemed suitable for an upmarket family satirical newspaper.

● Third prize, therefore, goes to A. Lomax:
Piers: Why don't you get in?
Celia: Is that a bum share offer?

● Second prize to Stuart Goodacre for the Magritte-inspired:
Piers: I am not lying in the bath.

● But the winner is S.P. Cain for the simple headline:
"The photograph shows an Iraqi civilian being tortured by a British soldier."



Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"England are learning to walk before they can run with their feet nailed firmly to the ground."
CLIVE TYLDESLEY, ITV
(Nick Chambers)

"... a lot of teams play each other towards the end of the season."
MICK QUINN, Radio 5 Live
(Nicholas Whitmore)

"Vulnerable children in Doncaster are buried, quite literally, in a pile of paperwork."
Doncaster Social Services Spokesperson, Radio 4
(Jane Kelly)

"It looked a little bit worse than it appeared..."
DAVID PLEAT, ITV
(Teresa Guerreiro)

"You can't beat everyone up all the time with the same brush."
STEVE CLARIDGE, Radio 5 Live
(Seth Gillman)

Letter from **Baku**

from Our Own Correspondent

IT'S a long way from the Caspian Sea to England's south coast, but we Azeris salute your Mike Hancock, Lib Dem MP for Portsmouth South, who stands up for our model democracy in the face of disgraceful criticism from a sanctimonious Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Last October our president, Ilham Aliyev, playboy son of the late supreme ruler Haydar Aliyev, was re-elected to a second term after a 28-day campaign boycotted by the main opposition party, Musavat. The boycott, on the grounds that Azeris enjoy no real freedom of assembly, also came in the face of fawning media reporting of the brilliant campaign by Aliyev's New Azerbaijan Party, YAP.

Funded by Azerbaijan's oil and subsidies from leading ministers (who enjoy monopolies on most items of international trade), YAP operates a voter-harvesting system, known as *yüzbashe*, or "one-hundred men". These patriotic souls try to persuade the electorate to vote for YAP or lose their government jobs. And there were those in the OSCE who felt this undermined the integrity of the election!

In electioneering circles, he who judges the process first, whether pundit or exit pollster, is most likely to influence opinion on how an election has been conducted, whatever caveats later emerge. As a member of the observer team of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), a quango within a quango, the Lib Dem Hancock was thus the early bird who greeted the president's great success. Indeed, so fair was the vote, he was able to endorse the entire process after visiting just seven polling stations, pre-empting the OSCE which covered a substantial percentage of our 5,400 stations. In the EU's name, Hancock condemned the opposition for behaving "undemocratically".

"It would be better," he said, "if the opposition joined the election even if they lost, because the election is an important process for the political organisations." This sent a clear signal to those fools at the US State Department who in their latest human rights report accuse Azerbaijan of "torture of persons in police and military custody; arbitrary arrest and detention, particularly of political opponents; imprisonment of persons for politically motivated reasons; restrictions on freedom of assembly, pressure on the media and worsening restrictions on political participation."

Hancock was at it again last month when Aliyev decided to test the loyalty of his long-suffering subjects anew by holding a referendum on extending his regime beyond two five-year terms in the event of a "state of war" – and insert 41 amendments to the 1995 constitution. The ever-loyal Hancock, whose image in the Azerbaijan press is of a frenzied milord in barrister's pinstripe and beard, was quick off the mark. PACE concluded the result of the vote demonstrated the "willingness of the people of Azerbaijan to have a greater stability and elements for further democratization", and noted that the "vote… was transparent, well-organised and held in a peaceful atmosphere".

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COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

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The fleet of one-person mini-submarines (emblazoned with the red and blue colours of the KLPD) were being displayed by the police, but locals were sceptical about their efficacy. "The water in this area is so dirty that you can barely see your hand in front of your eyes," said one, "and maximum visibility is only 30 cms, so how are they going to detect anything? Even if they do, how are they going to prove the source of a particular turd? Are they going to send it to a forensics lab for DNA testing? It's an unworkable plan." *(De Telegraaf, 22/1/09. Spotter: Einar Knobel)*

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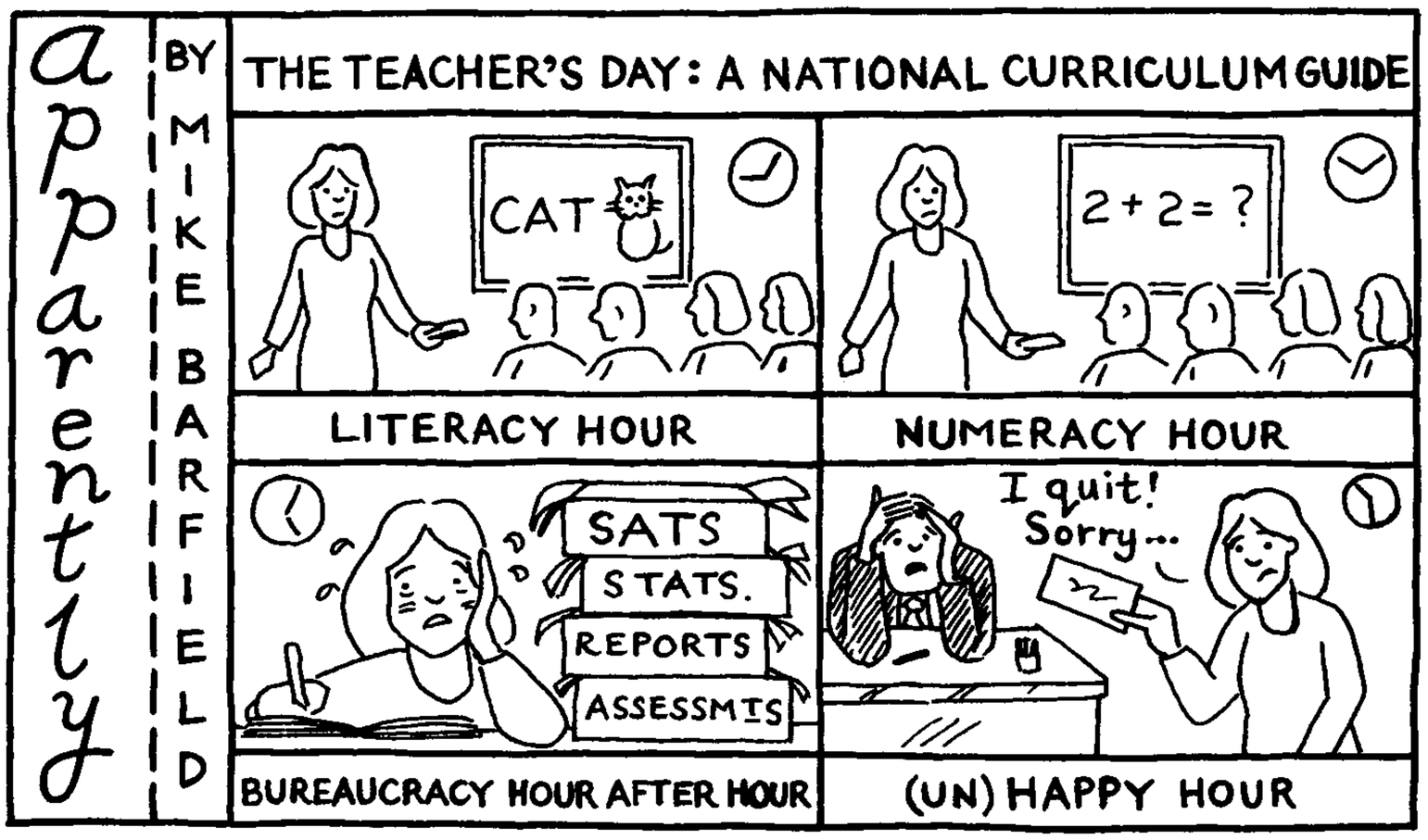
after them, but I didn't know how deep the water was, so I reluctantly paddled back to shore. I was disconsolate because, without my teeth, I knew I couldn't eat anything but thin soup.

"Next day, I went back to search the shoreline, and was staring out to sea when I noticed something bobbing in on the tide, and thought it might be my top plate. It washed up at the feet of a woman passing by, so I said to her 'excuse me miss, but are those my teeth?' and she looked at them and said 'I think they must be.' I couldn't believe my luck, because it must be a trillion to one chance that my teeth were washed back to me by the tide. The odd thing is that, when I put them back in my mouth, they were better than ever. They're cleaner and sharper now than before I lost them. I can eat a T-bone steak without any trouble" *(Northern District Times, 18/2/09. Spotter: Keith Arnold)*



Pseudo Names

... You should not be browbeaten into ending your Pseudo Names feature by threats from your correspondent G. Hadd. People like that should be locked up.

JUAN TANAMO.

... Re the Editor's suggestion in response to Mr G. Hadd's letter to end this correspondence. Should this occur, then it may well lead to further troubles.

CHRISTIAN UPRISING.

... The economy of the civilised world is wrecked and you expect us to make up silly names!

D. KLEINOFF
D. WEST.

... We would just like to say how disappointed we are that you have decided to close the correspondence on Pseudo Names (probably).

MAUREEN SORROW
DAN INANGER.

... Instead of making up silly names, why don't your contributors read a good book?

WARREN PEACE.

... Instead of producing a book of pseudonyms, could you not distribute something more lightweight?

PAM FLETT.

... I do hope that this nonsense fizzles out before the summer.

BARBIE KEW.

... Do you think it can be true that scientists have discovered a genetic link between the Scots and the native North American Mohican nation?

HAWKEYE THENOO.

... The Pseudo Names section of your organ just confirms for me that your magazine is going to the dogs!

JACK RUSSELL (Rev.)
Barking.

... I see that the editor is yet again calling a halt to this most valuable feature. Huge sadness is upon me. Even my faithful friend has noticed this and nuzzles me in support. Please think again Ed!

MEL & COLLIE.

... I just love Pseudo Names – it's wonderful. I also love Medicine Balls; Nooks And Corners; Down On The Farm; Signal Failures; Lookalikes; In The Back; the crossword; the cartoons; the classifieds. In fact I love it all.

POLLY AMOROUS.

... Please do not cancel Pseudo Names, it is my reason for living.

RAY ZONDETTE.

... So you have tried to bring the Pseudo Names correspondence to a close. We, the undersigned, think there may be trouble ahead.

BERT WEILL
DES MUHNLEIT
ANNE MÜSICH
ANN LOVE
ANDREW MANSE
LES FACE
DEE MÜSICH
ANNE DANCE.

... I can't help feeling that some of the Pseudo Names have not been easy to translate. I'd be glad to help with this if required.

ROSETTA STONE.

... Thank you for putting an end to the Pseudo Names correspondence. We've always admired your ability to stop repeating a joke before it gets dull. But we're worried that you might not be able to fill up your letters page now. Do you have any ideas on what you could publish?

ANNE DREW
NEIL INAVEST.

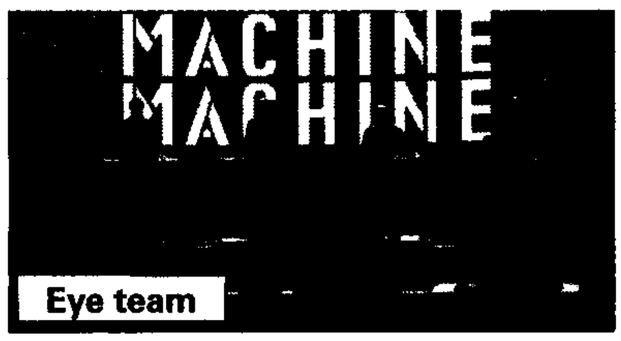
Jury disservice

Sir,

Of course the Eye likes to recycle gossip about anyone who puts their head over the parapet (Sir Paul Judge, Man In The Eye, 1232) but the Jury Team is not about its founder, it's about the platform it provides for independently minded people to get involved in politics. If you look at the list of those who have put themselves forward as potential Jury Team candidates they are by and large middle-aged people who have worked in the real world, are interested in community issues and are so unhappy about the current state of British politics that they are willing to do something about it. Many of your readers fit that description.

Regards,
NICK THOMPSON,
Via email.

Lookalike



Sir,

Now that Private Eye has entered the world of digital audio with its eyePlayer, I was struck by the similarity of the Eye's group of ageing entertainers to that other ageing digital performance act, Kraftwerk.

Yours,
DOUG LEITH,
Aberdeen.

Commander Bob Broadhurst, in charge of the operation, said his aim was to facilitate peaceful protest. But those peaceful demonstrators caught inside the cordon with no toilet facilities, and little water, questioned the idea that they were being allowed to exercise their right to march.

"The police should let us dribble out when we need to," said June Rogers,

Grauniad

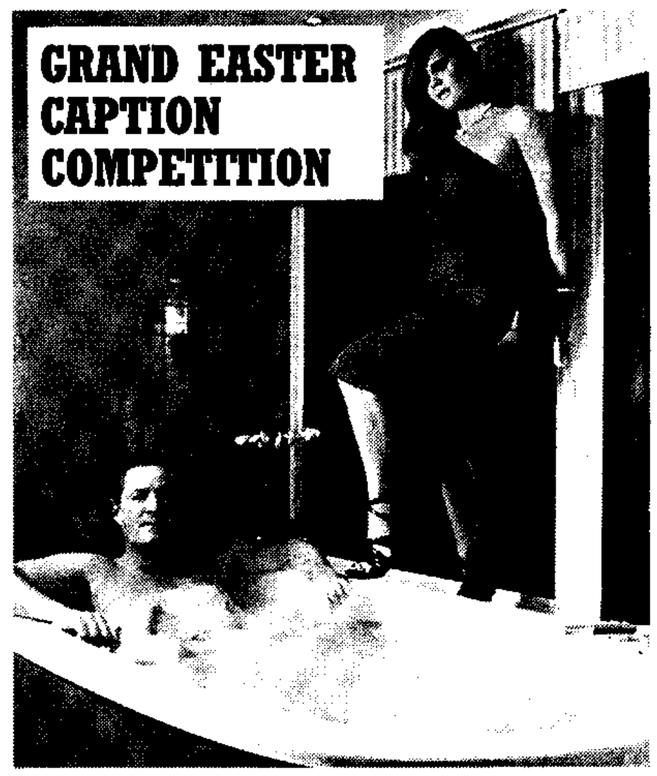
SOS SOAS

Sir,

Although 'Ratbiter' (Double-Dutch Standards, Eye 1232) mistakenly refers to SOAS as the School of Oriental and Asian Studies (it is, in fact, the School of Organized Anti-Semitism, better known as the School of Oriental and African Studies), he is correct to point out the customary double-standards at the institution.

Compare the invitation to Hezbollah's Ibrahim Moussawi to deliver lectures on "political Islam" (ie: Jews did 9/11) with the recent motion passed by the Student Union to boycott Israeli academic institutions. (Ironically, the same Union General Meeting (UGM) also contained a motion to "Stop the BNP: No Platform for Fascists", which was passed unanimously.)

Yours faithfully,
NAME & ADDRESS WITHHELD.



THE EDITOR was appalled by the large number of extremely crude entries from readers attempting to find humour in sexual or lavatorial double entendres concerning items being discovered in the bath. Almost as bad were the readers who appeared to be advocating the introduction of an electric toaster into the water.

None of these submissions was deemed suitable for an upmarket family satirical newspaper.

● Third prize, therefore, goes to A. Lomax:
Piers: Why don't you get in?
Celia: Is that a bum share offer?

● Second prize to Stuart Goodacre for the Magritte-inspired:
Piers: I am not lying in the bath.

● But the winner is S.P. Cain for the simple headline:
"The photograph shows an Iraqi civilian being tortured by a British soldier."

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"England are learning to walk before they can run with their feet nailed firmly to the ground."
CLIVE TYLDESLEY, ITV
(Nick Chambers)

"... a lot of teams play each other towards the end of the season."
MICK QUINN, Radio 5 Live
(Nicholas Whitmore)

"Vulnerable children in Doncaster are buried, quite literally, in a pile of paperwork."
Doncaster Social Services Spokesperson, Radio 4
(Jane Kelly)

"It looked a little bit worse than it appeared..."
DAVID PLEAT, ITV
(Teresa Guerreiro)

"You can't beat everyone up all the time with the same brush."
STEVE CLARIDGE, Radio 5 Live
(Seth Gillman)

Letter from **Baku**

from Our Own Correspondent

IT'S a long way from the Caspian Sea to England's south coast, but we Azeris salute your Mike Hancock, Lib Dem MP for Portsmouth South, who stands up for our model democracy in the face of disgraceful criticism from a sanctimonious Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Last October our president, Ilham Aliyev, playboy son of the late supreme ruler Haydar Aliyev, was re-elected to a second term after a 28-day campaign boycotted by the main opposition party, Musavat. The boycott, on the grounds that Azeris enjoy no real freedom of assembly, also came in the face of fawning media reporting of the brilliant campaign by Aliyev's New Azerbaijan Party, YAP.

Funded by Azerbaijan's oil and subsidies from leading ministers (who enjoy monopolies on most items of international trade), YAP operates a voter-harvesting system, known as *yüzbashe*, or "one-hundred men". These patriotic souls try to persuade the electorate to vote for YAP or lose their government jobs. And there were those in the OSCE who felt this undermined the integrity of the election!

In electioneering circles, he who judges the process first, whether pundit or exit pollster, is most likely to influence opinion on how an election has been conducted, whatever caveats later emerge. As a member of the observer team of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), a quango within a quango, the Lib Dem Hancock was thus the early bird who greeted the president's great success. Indeed, so fair was the vote, he was able to endorse the entire process after visiting just seven polling stations, pre-empting the OSCE which covered a substantial percentage of our 5,400 stations. In the EU's name, Hancock condemned the opposition for behaving "undemocratically".

"It would be better," he said, "if the opposition joined the election even if they lost, because the election is an important process for the political organisations." This sent a clear signal to those fools at the US State Department who in their latest human rights report accuse Azerbaijan of "torture of persons in police and military custody; arbitrary arrest and detention, particularly of political opponents; imprisonment of persons for politically motivated reasons; restrictions on freedom of assembly, pressure on the media and worsening restrictions on political participation."

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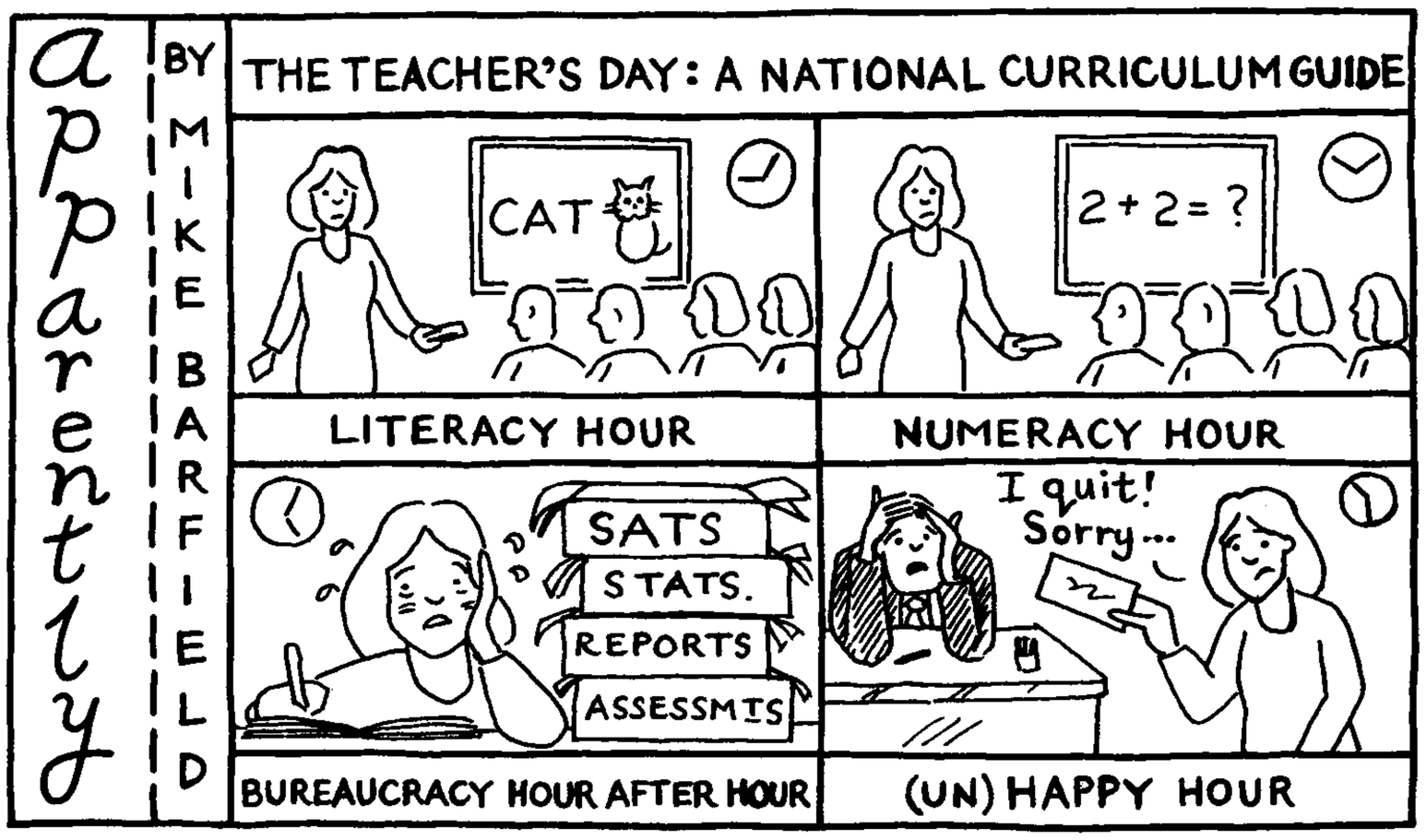
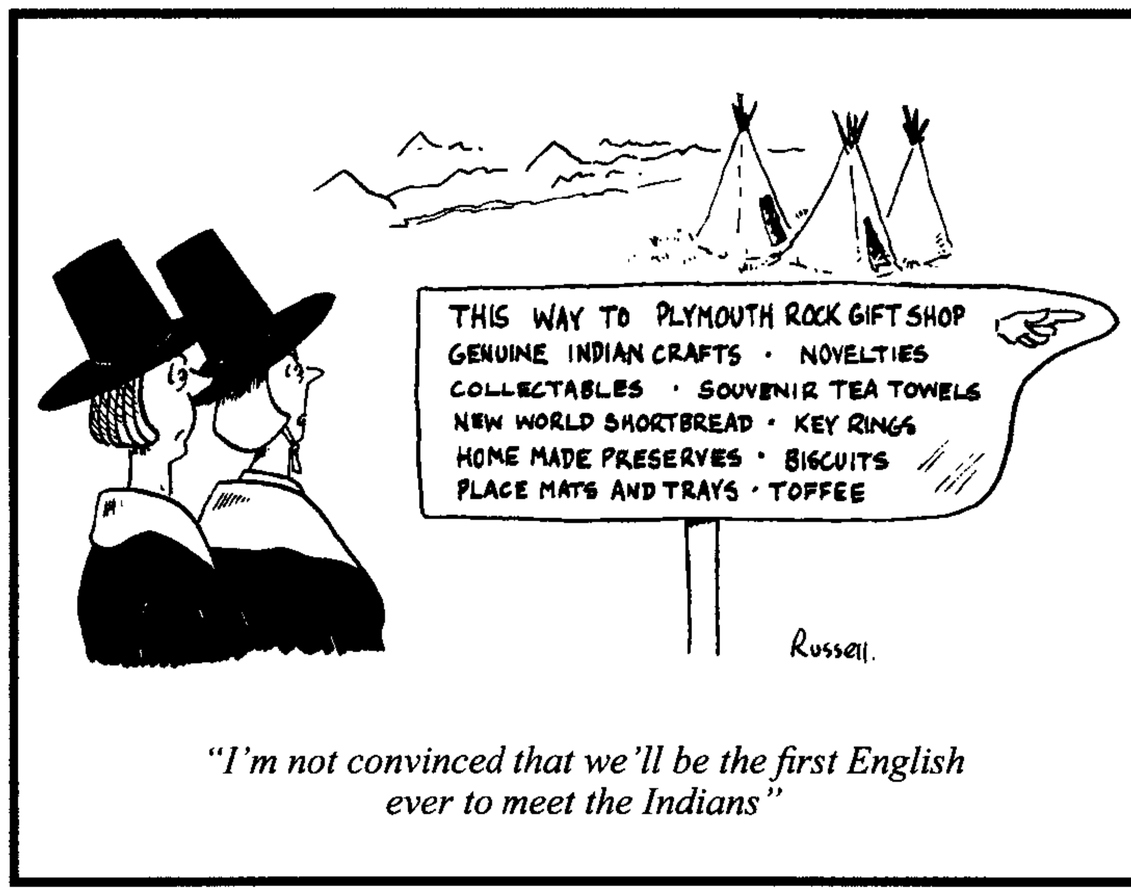


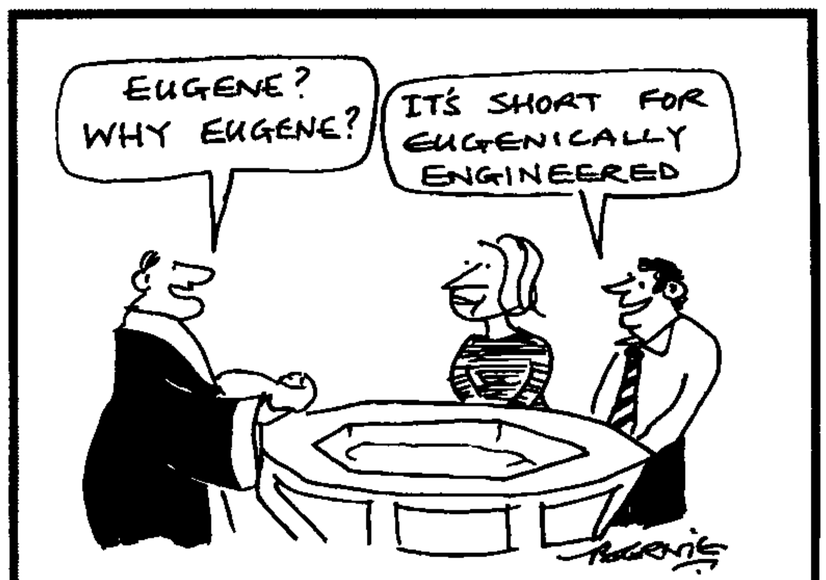

THIS WAY TO PLYMOUTH ROCK GIFT SHOP
GENUINE INDIAN CRAFTS · NOVELTIES
COLLECTABLES · SOUVENIR TEA TOWELS
NEW WORLD SHORTBREAD · KEY RINGS
HOME MADE PRESERVES · BISCUITS
PLACE MATS AND TRAYS · TOFFEE
Russell.

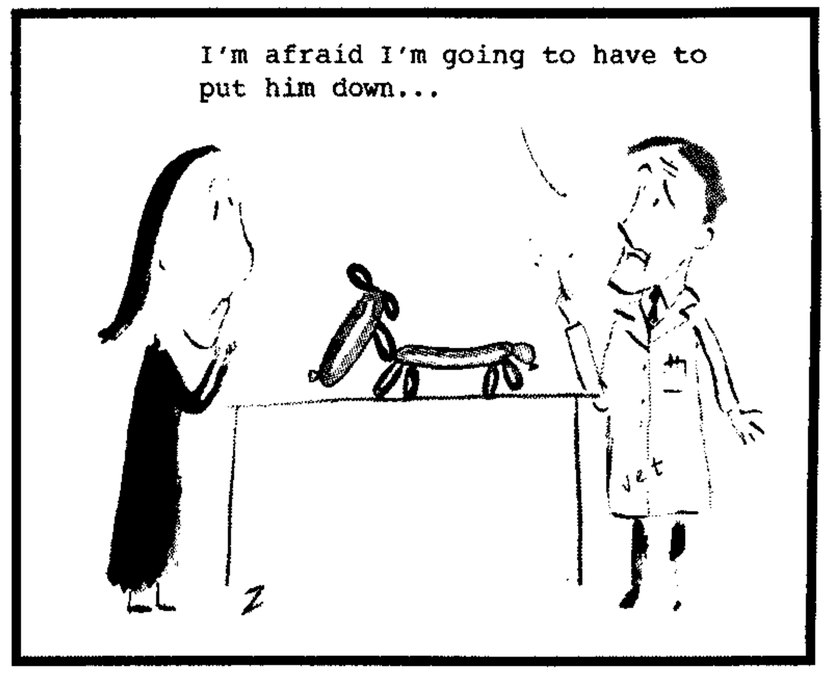
"I'm not convinced that we'll be the first English ever to meet the Indians"

"Oh, don't panic, petal... it's called a thought. Now trust Mummy and put back your iPod and you will soon be as right as rain"

"Do you mind? This is a quiet coach!"

"Come on, you lot, smarten yourselves up – tourists coming"





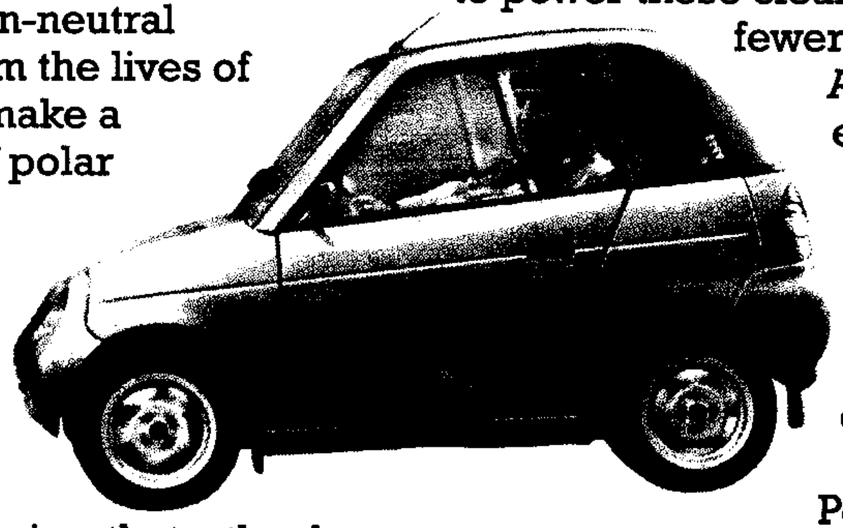
PRIME MINISTERIAL DECREE NO. 42

From the Desk of the Supreme Leader

Comrades,

Now that I have saved the world from economic meltdown, I must now turn my efforts towards saving the world from environmental meltdown. To this end I shall shortly be launching the greatest revolution in transportation since the invention of the wheel.

I give you, Comrades, the "People's Electric Car" – an extraordinary breakthrough in carbon-neutral technology that will not only transform the lives of every worker in Britain but will also make a significant contribution to the lives of polar bears yet unborn.



Just image if you will, Comrades, the brave new world which will dawn when there is a People's Electric Car outside every home!

Each morning, millions of happy smiling workers will make their way to their workplace environment, knowing that – thanks to the People's Electric Car – they will no longer have to endure the filthy, noxious fumes with which we became so familiar in the times when our country was ruled over by the discredited former leader Blair, with his corrupt ties to the Ecclestonite-Clarksonist motor industry and the Busho-Cheneyist petro-military cartel.

No, the air will be sweet, and every worker will be able to breathe freely as he hums his way to his place of toil in one of my new all-electric People's Cars. And what work will all these contented Comrades be performing?

The answer is simple!

They will be making more People's Electric Cars for other Comrades to buy. And this will solve at a stroke the problem of mass unemployment which, as we know, has only been inflicted on our economy thanks to the reckless financial imprudentism of the sub-primeist jackals of Wall Street and their lickspittle allies in the regime of the despised former leader Ex-Comrade Blair.

And every ounce of the clean, Green electricity used to power these clean, Green, People's Cars will mean fewer emissions of planet-destroying CO_2.

And where will all this eco-friendly electricity come from to power the cars, you may well ask?

Comrades – again the answer is simple. Giant new People's Power Stations must be built to provide the necessary driving force for our new carbon-free world.

And what sort of fuel will these People's Power Stations burn?

There is sadly insufficient space in this Communiqué to explain in full all the details of our plans for this, but rest assured that your Supreme Leader will be personally taking charge of this and all other matters as we move towards the bright new Green future which awaits us all just over the horizon.

Yours,

Gordon Brown

Supreme Leader

THE PEOPLE'S BUDGET

Talking Balls

Gordon's Darling

I must remind Comrades that Commissar Darling will shortly be presenting his annual budget to the Supreme Soviet.

Comrades will be aware that since I myself had to give up presenting the budget in order to become the Supreme Leader, there has been a marked deterioriation in the national economy.

Comrade Darling has already admitted many errors in the non-fulfilment of his Five-Year Plan to eliminate Boom-and-Bustism, and he should be warned that there are no rewards for failure in the Britain of today (as Comrade Goodwin is well aware).

Already, Commissar Balls is waiting in the wings, keen to move on from his triumphant direction of the Department for SATS, Skills, Lifelong Lollipop Ladies and Sex Education For The Under-Fives.

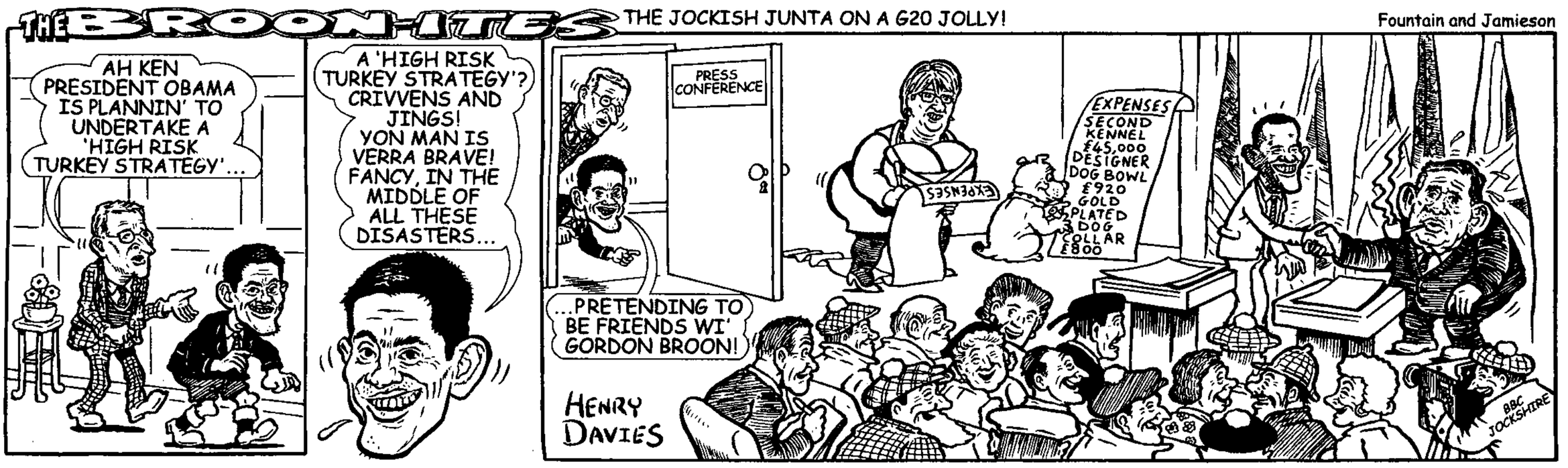
Let Comrade Darling tremble at the name of Balls!

The Supreme Leader

COMRADES' QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Q: Why is the Supreme Leader changing the law to allow prisoners to have the vote?

A: So that if innocent comrades end up in prison on trumped-up charges of fraud (mentioning no names Second Home Affairs Commissar Jacqui Smith, Comrade McNulty etc etc), they will still be allowed their democratic right to support the Supreme Leader in the general election.


THE BROON-ITES
THE JOCKISH JUNTA ON A G20 JOLLY!
Fountain and Jamieson
AH KEN PRESIDENT OBAMA IS PLANNIN' TO UNDERTAKE A 'HIGH RISK TURKEY STRATEGY'...
A 'HIGH RISK TURKEY STRATEGY'? CRIVVENS AND JINGS! YON MAN IS VERRA BRAVE! FANCY, IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THESE DISASTERS...
PRESS CONFERENCE
...PRETENDING TO BE FRIENDS WI' GORDON BROON!
EXPENSES
EXPENSES
SECOND KENNEL £45,000
DESIGNER DOG BOWL £920
GOLD PLATED DOG COLLAR £800
BBC JOCKSHIRE
HENRY DAVIES

NEWS VENDOR WAS 'TOP TERRORIST SUSPECT' Knacker's Shock Claim

by Our Crime Team **Troilus** and **Cressida Dick**

CHIEF Inspector 'Knacker of the Yard' Knacker last night lashed out at critics of the police, who had suggested that the police had somehow gone "over the top" in their treatment of the late newspaper seller Mr Juan Carlos de Tomlinson.

"Obviously it is a tragic shame that Mr Tomlinson died shortly after being assaulted by one of my team, Officer Z," said the Inspector, "but we were in a highly dangerous riot situation and we had every reason to suppose that Mr de Tomlinson was a known terrorist who was about to blow himself up, along with most of London.

"We have examined the CCTV footage very carefully," said Knacker, "and it is quite clear that officers issued Mr de Tomlinson with a clear warning, even though there is no sound on the footage.

"Highly-trained Scotland Yard lipreaders," he went on, "have confimed that shortly before Mr de Tomlinson's unfortunate demise, Officer Z shouted 'Stop! Proceed no further. I am an armed police officer, using my powers under the Prevention of Terrorism and Anything We Don't Approve Of Act 2006 to assist you in falling to the ground'.

"Mr Tomlinson ignored this very reasonable request," Knacker concluded, "and, sadly, the rest is history."

Officer Z has been commended for his "bravery" and has been promoted to become Sergeant Y.

'BROWN SHOOTS SPOTTED' Claims Chancellor

by Our Recession Staff
Phil Job-Centres

ALISTAIR Darling last night gave the clearest signal yet that the recovery is "far from under way".

He told MPs that he had "definite evidence of sightings of Brown Shoots".

"Believe me," he told the House of Commons, "it is not all doom and gloom out there. It's much worse. Everywhere I look, things are withering and dying. That is what I call Brown Shoots."

LATE NEWS

■ **Brown Shoots Darling**

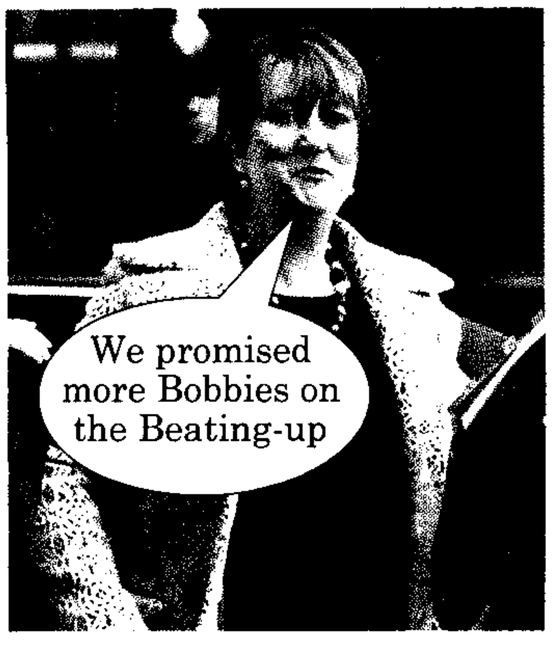
"It's magnificent. From now on no-one will hear the name 'Brown' without thinking 'Capability'"

THE POLICE An Apology

IN COMMON with all other newspapers, we may have given the impression that during the recent demonstrations in central London, Mr Ian Tomlinson, a news vendor, died of a heart attack and was immediately attended by sympathetic police officers, who bravely attempted to resuscitate him while being bombarded with a hail of bottles, bricks and other missiles thrown by a mob of anarchists.

Headlines such as "Our brave boys in blue battle to save dying man from rioters", "Heartless anarchists hinder Met Samaritans" and "String up these murderous leftie scum" may have led readers to believe that the part played by the Metropolitan Police in the events surrounding the death of Mr Tomlinson was in some way commendable.

We now realise, having examined photographic evidence of the incident sent in by our readers, that there was not a jot nor scintilla of truth in any of the above. We are happy to accept that Mr Tomlinson was attacked from behind by an officer of the Metropolitan Police, wielding a baton, and was left to die on the roadside, comforted only by concerned members of the anarchist community. We would like to apologise for any distress or confusion caused by our credulity and laziness and our *desire to cover our* pages with pictures of Michelle Obama, rather than find out what's going on.



GREAT POLICE JOKES Revisited

Q: Have you got the time, officer?
A: It's time I hit you over the head.

Q: How do I get to the hospital, officer?
A: You walk down the street and then I attack you.

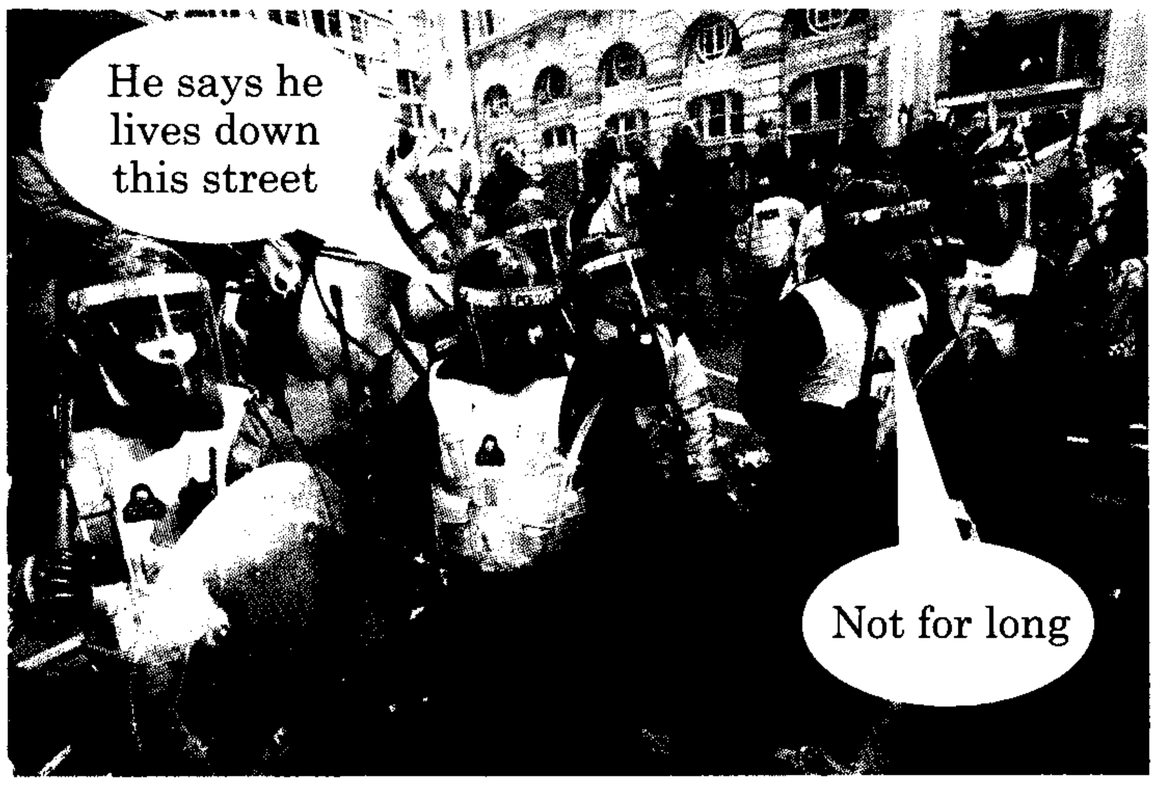
(That's enough, Ed)

ITALIAN EARTHQUAKE DISASTER AS MAN NOT KILLED

ITALY was in shock last night when it was revealed that Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi had survived the terrible earthquakes that have hit central Italy.

Said a distressed cafe owner, Bepe Fantoni, 78, "It is terrible – a large lump of masonry did not fall from the church onto his head. Instead, he is walking around, large as life, telling us all that the earthquake is no big deal and we should treat it as a camping holiday."

TOMLINSON: NEW FOOTAGE



THAT SECRET ANTI-TERROR DOCUMENT NOTE IN FULL

THE EYE can reveal for the first time the uncensored briefing note that put an end to the career of high-flying Assistant Commissioner Bob Thick.

Phone dentist. **TOP SECRET**

Important: Whatever happens, do not be photographed getting out of a car holding this. Put in a file underneath some other papers, so it will not be seen.

Operation: Cockup

Procedure: Dawn swoop on the following terrorist suspects:

1. Mr O. bin Laden, Flat C, The Peabody Estate, Hattersley Road, Edgbaston.
2. Mr al Qaeda, Flat B, The Peabody Estate, Hattersley Road, Edgbaston.
3. The Late Mr Saddam Hussein, Flat A, The Peabody Estate, Hattersley Road, Edgbaston.

Pick up Dry Cleaning

- Numbers of officers required: 1,999
- Force level: Maximum
- Fire power: Assault rifles, machine guns, tanks and strategic nuclear weapons in case of dirty bomb.

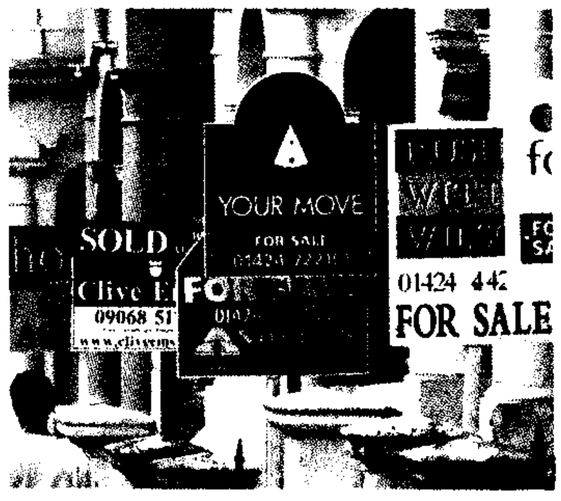
"Health and Safety make me wear it in case I fall"

School news

St Cakes

Recession Term begins today. There are 3 boys in the school. I.O.U. Toxic-Asset (Lehman's) is Head of Hedges. R.B.S. Light-Touch (Turner's) is Senior Regulator. A.I.G. Bonus-Culture (Goodwin's) is Sub-Primus Inter Pares. All members of staff have been invited to take a compulsory sabbatical pending a recovery in pupil numbers. The Credit Crunch will be run over Northern Rock on 17 June. St Cakes Day will be on 8 July and will be held in Mr Kipling's study (all six parents are invited). The Speaker will be Robert Peston (O.C.). There will be a performance of *John Cage's Four Minutes, 33 Seconds of Silence* by the three boys above. The school play will be *Three Characters In Search Of An Author,* adapted from Pirandello. Tickets for both from the Bursar, Maj. B.N.P. Mosley (O.C.), c/o The Landski Bank, Reykjavik. Redundancies will be on 12 July.

HOUSE PRICES RISE/FALL



THERE was the clearest sign yet of a **massive recovery/total collapse** in the housing market after the highly respected Nationalandifax survey showed that house prices **rose unexpectedly/fell dramatically** last month.

"We have been looking for a clear sign of where the market is going," said the Nationlandifax Chief Economist, "and this **stunning rise/sickening fall** in prices last month means we can say with absolute certainty that the worst is **over/yet to come**." *(Reuters)*

Exclusive to all papers

JOHN PRESCOTT IS BRITAIN'S LAZIEST MP

ON OTHER PAGES

- Bears defecate in woods despite there being a perfectly good public toilet only fifty metres away.
- Pope a Catholic because it's too much hassle being a Muslim.

Top Historian to Write Pinter Biography

by Our Literary Staff ***Phil Shelves***

THE distinguished historian, Lady Antonia Fraser, is to write a biography of her late husband, Sir Harold Pinter, one of the greatest writers of our age, whose plays won him the Nobel Prize for Literature.

What You Will Read

Chapter One

Sir Harold Pinter was born in Stratford on 23 April 1564, the son of a humble (*cont. p. 94*)

the PREMIERSH*TS

PAUL WOOD

IT MUST BE DREADFUL BEING A REFEREE
ALL THAT ABUSE FROM THOSE MILLIONAIRES ON THE PITCH
AND ALL YOU GET TO WALK AWAY WITH IS A FEW EXTRA QUID

OBAMA NEWS ROUNDUP

PRESIDENT OBAMA MAKES SURPRISE VISIT

THE PEOPLE of America were stunned yesterday when President Obama paid an unscheduled whistle-stop visit to Washington.

During his brief stay in the devastated region, President Obama pledged to support efforts to rebuild America's shattered economy, before quickly jetting off overseas again to meet the applause of cheering crowds.

"It's amazing he could find time to visit our little country," said one thirty-stone woman in a big floppy hat. "Particularly when he has so many photographers requiring his presence in other parts of the world."

OBAMA – NEW ARMS PLEDGE

by Our G20 Staff **Debbie McGee-Twenty**

PRESIDENT Obama, last night announced a dramatic arms proposal following the G20 meeting of world leaders in London.

Said the President, "I promise that from now on my wife will walk arm in arm with the Queen at all times. The Cold War is over. The old days of mutual standoffishness are a thing of the past. It's a new age of intercontinental massages."

This announcement by the world's remaining superpower took other leaders by surprise and there were immediately calls for similar arms policies to be applied unilaterally.

"We would all like to walk arm in arm with Michelle Obama", said a communique from all the G20 nations.

But there was trouble looming as North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il demanded his right to have his arms around Mrs Obama.

"If I don't get my demands," he sang, "I will blow up the whole world with my nuclear bomb."

MICHELLE OBAMA 'WOWS BRITAIN'

by **Phillippa Space**

FROM the moment Michelle Obama's plane touched down in London, Britain fell under the spell of this youthful, charismatic woman.

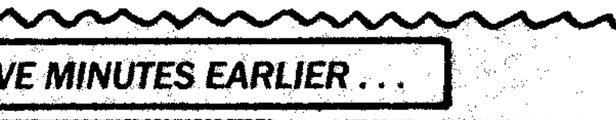
Here was a woman who wore a dress one day then another dress the next day, with clear echoes of Princess Diana.

For the hundreds of London schoolgirls lucky enough to meet Michelle, she stood as a shining example to them of how a woman can make it on her own, provided she marries a really powerful and famous (*cont. for 5,000 words*).

LITTLE BRITAIN

G20 – How The World Saw Gordon's Triumph!

Dave Snooty AND HIS PALS



WHAT A LOAD OF PRETENTIOUS POSTURING!!!
YOU SHOULD BE DOING THAT!
ENVY
G20
OH DEAR - DAVE'S BEEN SIDELINED!
NO - I JUST MET OBAMA AND HE WAS VERY INTERESTED IN WHAT I HAD TO SAY...
FIVE MINUTES EARLIER...
WHO ARE YOU?
DAVE SNOOTY, SIR
TUG!
THAT'S VERY INTERESTING. GOODBYE

'POPE OUT OF TOUCH WITH CATHOLICS,' Says Blair

by Our Religious Affairs Correspondent
Christopher Howseyourholyfather

THE LEADER of the world's two billion Roman Catholics, Tony Blair, today issued an encyclical, De Benedicto Geriatrico Homophobico, pointing out that the Pope "has little idea what ordinary Catholics like myself think about the big issues of the, you know, day."

Hail Blairy

Interviewed in the magazine *Platitude* by the leading gay mystic, Johann Hari Krishna, Mr Blair, a former Anglican clergyman, said, "I have been a Catholic for at least five minutes, and I think I am well qualified to tell the Pope what to do.

"Frankly, he's old and past it, and it's time for a new leader to take over, someone more in touch with the world as it is."

Full of shit

"Hey, let's get real about this," continued Father Blair. "We need a new Catholicism, providing a new People's Religion for all the millions of people out there who are looking for a charismatic, new spiritual leader who doesn't believe in all that old Catholic rubbish."

"Your renaming idea doesn't seem to be working"

Those Sainsbury's Name Changes In Full

OLD NAME	NEW NAME
Pollock	Colin
Pillock	Jamie

Starting this week... an exciting new column by

STANLEY JOHNSON

(Father of Boris Johnson, Mayor of London)

What ho, readers! It's Boris's dad here! Johnson senior, as it were. And let me make two things clear straightaway. One, I haven't been given this job because I'm Boris's pater. And, two, I am completely different from Boris in every way. Comprenez? Cripes, blimey. I've had a very interesting career in my own right, and you can read all about it in my new book, "I Was Boris's Dad"!

Toodle pip!

Stanley

A review of Stanley Johnson's book by Rachel Johnson appears on p. 94

From Gnome Souvenirs

THE JADE GOODY MEMORIAL PLATE

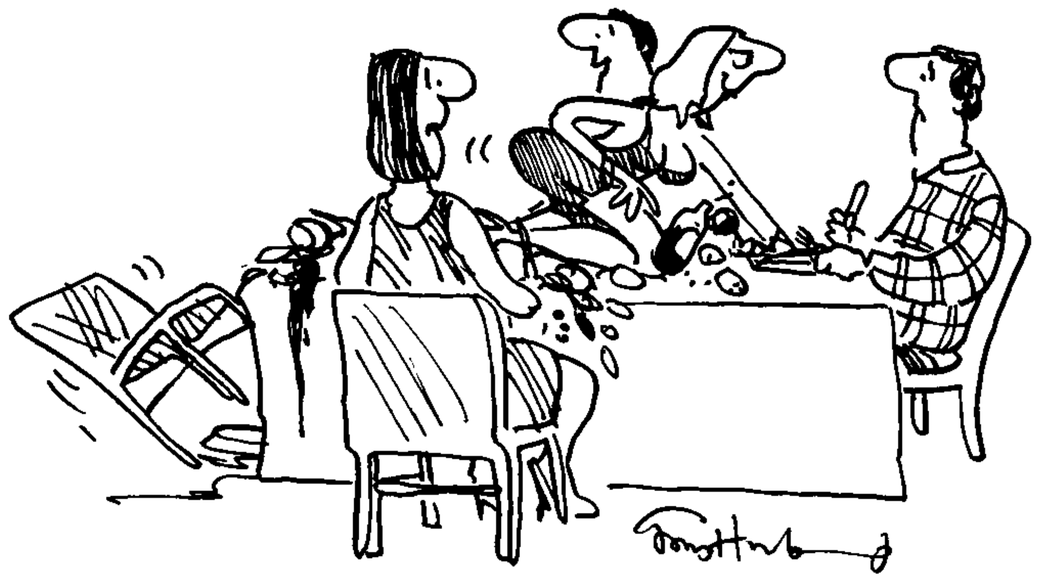
THIS MOVING tribute to one of Britain's greatest heroines is now available in a limited edition of only 6 million. Handcrafted from green Jade-style porcelain in the Hong Kong workshops of oriental master craftsman Chee Po Tat, this unique plate is not only a historic souvenir, but is also an investment which in years to come will be treasured by your children and their children's partners' step-children and the people next door.

Although designed as an ornamental artefact, the Goody Plate can be used as a receptacle for burgers, fries, beans and similar nutritional items.

WARNING: Do not put the Goody Plate in the dishwasher, as the high temperatures may damage the green colouring, thus reducing the value of your priceless heirloom.

FURTHER WARNING: In some extreme instances the Goody Plate may, after exposure to hot water and detergent, reveal the image of the late Princess Diana with the legend "Diana the People's Princess 1961-1997". Gnome Limited Edition Artefacts accepts no responsibility for the above.

Yours for only £299.99 (+ VAT + p&p).
Send cash now to: Jade Goody Plate Offer, Unit 94, The Max Clifford Industrial Estate, Yeovil.



"T'huh, my wife's a terrible flirt"

How I Joined In With The G20 Rabble

by An Anarchist

IT WAS ten-thirty on Wednesday morning. Outside the Bank of England a motley crew of journalists and photographers had brought the city to a standstill.

I had dressed as one of them, wearing combat trousers and trainers to disguise the fact that I was actually an anti-capitalist protestor who had decided to infiltrate the media mob for the day.

The assembled hacks were already furiously shouting slogans at the police such as "Where is the riot?" and "You said there would be thousands of them."

I was shocked by their cynicism and their determination to ruin the day for everyone.

"Are you an anarchist?" one of them asked me suspiciously, eyeing my torn t-shirt and combat trousers.

"Of course not," I murmured. "I'm from the *Guardian*."

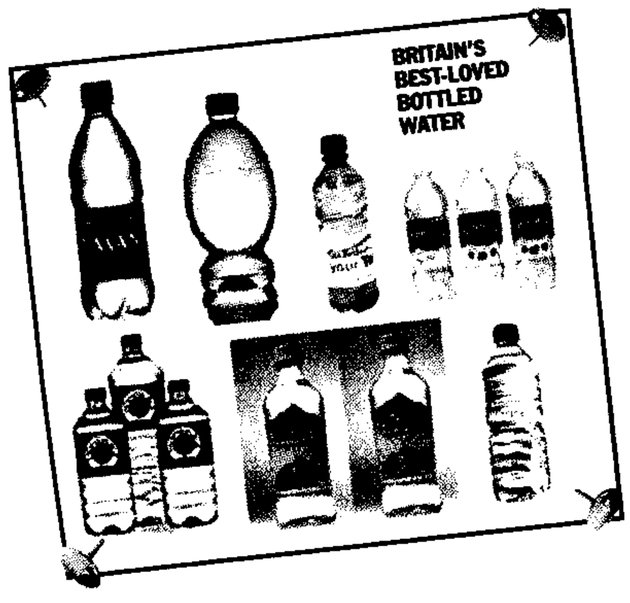
The answer seemed to satisfy him, and he moved off to talk to his friends from the BBC.

But then news filtered through that the journalists weren't going to let the anarchists leave until they had done something interesting – smashed some windows or set fire to something.

But, by that stage, I had had enough and decided to retire from this futile and pointless exercise in "Protest Journalism" that *(cont. p. 94)*

IN TODAY'S PAPER

FREE WALLCHART



BRITAIN'S BEST-LOVED BOTTLED WATER

All the various types of bottled water given away free with British newspapers collected together on one wall chart.

TOMORROW: Britain's Disappearing Newspapers. Including the very rare Independent and Independent on Sunday to be found only in a few remote newsagents.

Is JACQUI SMITH Allowed To Claim A Second Trouser Press On Her Commons Expenses?

by Our Parliamentary Staff **Peter Obore**

THE Parliamentary Ombudsman has been asked to rule on whether the Home Secretary is allowed to claim a second £25,000 top-of-the-range De Luxe Supercrease Corby Trouser Press for her sister's flat, which is officially designated as her main residence, although she is already claiming for a £20,000 Wrinklemaster Executive Trouser Press at her "second" home in Redditch.

In a tearful interview on the BBC's afternoon women's show, "Who Wears The Trousers?", the Home Secretary said, "I am only being picked on because I am a woman.

"If a man had two trouser presses, no one would bat an eyelid, but just because I am a woman, the whole media is conducting a witch hunt.

"Everything I have done is within the rules, and my husband, who is my parliamentary assistant, is entitled to use both trouser presses, when he isn't watching Mr Desmond's adult entertainment packages on one of our many televisions."

WHAT SHE CLAIMED
Jacqui Smith's Expenses In Full

One trouser press **£25,000**
One patio heater **£10,000**
One pop-up toaster **£2,000**
Packet of AA Duracell batteries **£5.99**
One Bic biro **£0.19**
Packet washing powder **£3.99**
Post-it Notes **£0.99**
Sellotape dispenser **£2.99**
Pot Noodles (curry flavour) **£0.75**
Subscription to New Statesman Magazine **£32.25**
One "Whisk-Gone" beard trimmer **£9.99**
One shower hat **£0.22**
One ocean-going yacht **£12,799,486**

(Is this OK? J. Smith)

MPS PROTEST AT GOOGLE STREET VIEW

by Our Privacy Staff **Tom Peeping**

MEMBERS of Parliament reacted furiously last night as new images of private homes were posted on the internet by the giant search engine conglomerate Google.

"These images are a direct threat to MPs' security," claimed junior minister Mr Nick Cash.

Internet Curtains

"For example, Google is showing an image of my London residence with me clearly not visible at all. You can just log on at any time of day or night and I am nowhere to be seen."

He continued, "This is my primary residence and yet it looks as though I do not live there and nor do my family.

"However, there is another house of mine elsewhere on Google Street View which is clearly decorated to a very high standard with a garden full of cardboard boxes from brand new white goods, appliances and plasma TVs.

Fiddling While Home Earns

"And there I am in the window filling out my expenses forms."

Mr Cash concluded: "It is an appalling breach of privacy and is moreover extremely dangerous. I could be targeted by mischief makers claiming that I have lied about which house is my second home and could find myself sacked for being a sleazy humbug."

From The Message Boards

Members of the online community respond to the major issues of the day...

Archbishop of York calls for St George's Day holiday

Well said, Doctor John! Yet many bishops still refuse to ring bells on St George's Day for fear of offending other religions. What nonsense! We are having an English beer-drinking contest at our local pub, with a prize for everyone who sups more than twenty pints. All welcome – thirsty Muslims included! – ***Stoutish_Yeoman***

ring them bells loud and proud! an if people dont like it nock 7 bell's out of THEM ●●● An if a fake pars-port fall's out of ther pocket then boot them back to the helhole they come from ●●● we'er a crist-ian country with a proud tradition of toleranse an freedom so lets stand up for it – ***Eye_4_an_eye***

As an Englishman with a thousand years of Angelfolc blood coursing through my veins, I refuse to celebrate this foreign parvenu (I use the French advisedly). I shall, as is my custom, celebrate the sacred days of St. Edmund, St. Cuthbert and St. Alban. – ***Athelstan***

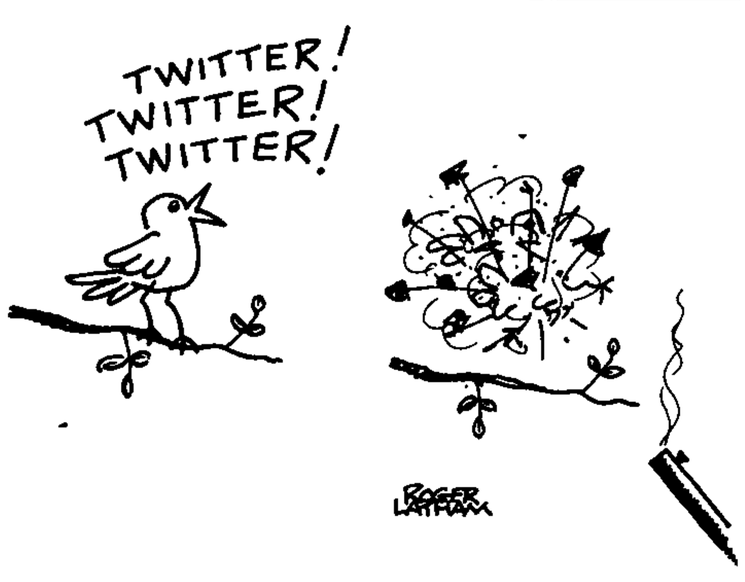
On St George's Day many ex-servicemen wear their uniforms. Perhaps our footballers could follow suit. Those who have represented the national team should wear their England shirts during any club games they play that week. It will be interesting to see how many do. – ***Metric_Martyr***

Why not celebrate the best of modern England? I suggest George Orwell, Alan Bleasdale, the Goodies, the Young Ones, John Peel, Billy Bragg, Linda Smith, Jeremy Hardy, Young's Special and Twiglets – ***Rhythm'n'Booze***

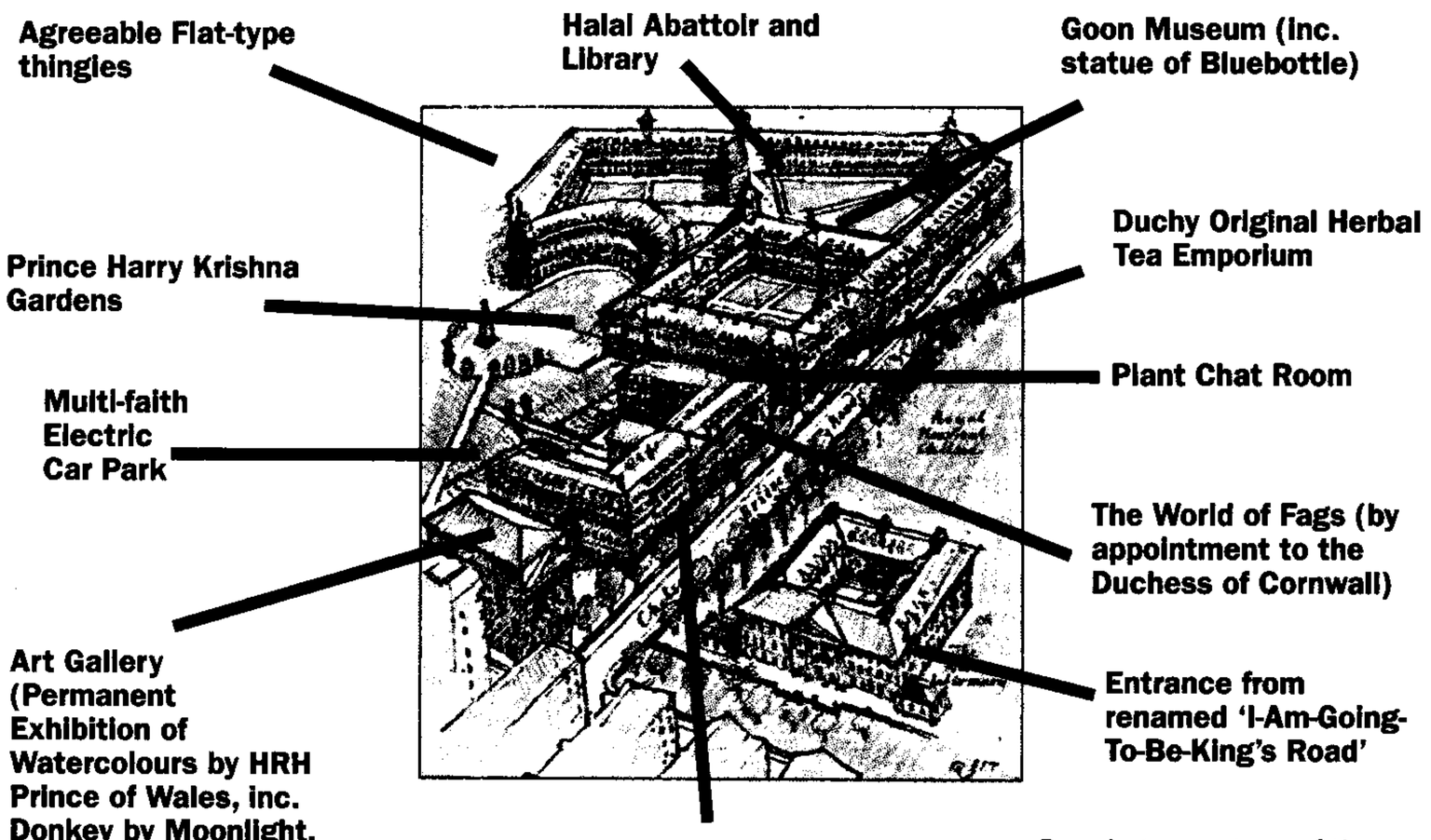
The brit-ish umpire was a sauce of pride but most angler saxen's know nothin about it saint georges day = an excuse to eat chocolat egg's – ***Broken_Britan***

Like many patriots I escaped from "Great" Britain years ago and now live in Cyprus. In our village we fly the flag of St George on 23rd April, the saltire on St Andrew's day, and the union flag every day. I ring bells whenever I can, and would fire my cannon too if the local police hadn't threatened me with prosecution. – ***Pat_the_ex-pat***

Happy AB-SENT GEORGOUS JADE to evry 1 – ***Binny***



Prince Charles's Vision For Old Chelsea Barracks Site On King's Road


Agreeable Flat-type thingies
Halal Abattoir and Library
Goon Museum (inc. statue of Bluebottle)
Prince Harry Krishna Gardens
Duchy Original Herbal Tea Emporium
Multi-faith Electric Car Park
Plant Chat Room
The World of Fags (by appointment to the Duchess of Cornwall)
Art Gallery (Permanent Exhibition of Watercolours by HRH Prince of Wales, inc. Donkey by Moonlight, Cairo 1995)
Entrance from renamed 'I-Am-Going-To-Be-King's Road'
Organic Fitness Centre

Drawings courtesy of the architect, Sir Terence Wogan

Yes, It's The Poppadom Proms!

by Our Arts Correspondent
Sir Henry Bollywood

FOR the first time ever, the Albert Hall will pulsate to the sound of the greatest Indian film music ever written whilst thousands of scantily clad Asian lovelies gyrate to the strains of Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite *(Is this right? Ed)*.

Make no mistake! The Proms have gone spicy! Phew! Two pints of lager and a naan bread, please, Maestro!

18 July: What You Will Hear
Massala's 7th Symphony "The Slumdog", played by the Balti-more Symphony Orchestra of Mumbai conducted by Sir Daniel Baren-Boyle.

Dyslexia Advider
Student Services
Birmingham City University
http://www.jobs.ac.uk/jobs/JV584/

jobs.ac.uk

"We've been invited to a black tie do – your mother has died, Neville"

GNOME ADS

Job Vacancy

A child

AN unexpected vacancy for the position of child has arisen with a famous pop star.

This is a full-time position and would suit an outgoing child aged between 3 and 5 who is photogenic and preferably orphaned, though particularly cute non-orphaned children will be considered under the right circumstances.

The successful applicant would need to show a wide knowledge of pop music, enjoy organic, macrobiotic food, have a working knowledge of the Kabbalah faith and dislike all of Guy Richie's mockney gangster films.

Contact M. Donna,
c/o The Countryside, Englandshire.

DIARY

MARGARET DRABBLE

I maintain (though she might, in truth, query this) that it was I who usefully introduced my Aunt Phyl to scampi and chips, at an excellent but now defunct castellated hostelry overlooking the Bristol Channel at Linton in 1973. Or was it 1974? Conceivably (and here I am, metaphorically speaking, sticking my neck out) it was 1972, or even 1971, though if it was 1971, then it might not have been the castellated hostelry that we ate in, as a useful visit to my local library yesterday afternoon between 3.30pm and 4.23pm confirmed me in my suspicion that the hostelry in question was in fact closed for the greater part of 1971, owing to a refurbishment programme. In that case, and if it really was 1971, which, frankly, seems increasingly unlikely given the other dates available, then it is within the realms of possibility that we ate at another hostelry entirely, possibly one overlooking the North Sea, and, if so, it is equally possible that we feasted not on scampi and chips but on shepherds pie. Did we also consume a side-order of vegetables? Memory is, I have found, a fickle servant, so I am unable to recall whether, on this occasion, we indulged in a side-order of vegetables, if we were there at all. It is, I fear, another blank, another lost or discarded piece in the jigsaw of my past.

Writers are territorial, and they resent intruders. My sister Susan (who prefers not to be reminded that her first name is Susan, though Susan it is, and who prefers to struggle along under the pen-name of A.S. Byatt rather than Susan, even though those of us in her family know all too well that the tell-tale "S" definitely stands for Susan) said in an interview somewhere (I didn't read it myself, not having time to waste) that she was distressed when she found that I had written (many decades ago) about a particular tea set that our family possessed, because she had always wanted to use it herself. I had some sympathy with Sue, who felt I had appropriated something that was not mine, even though, as my lawyer pointed out, it was, strictly speaking, not exclusively hers either, and if she had really wanted to write about that tea set then why hadn't she done so when she had the opportunity, and not wait until she knew that I had done so before opening her big fat mouth and complaining that I had got there first?

I used the tea set in my novel "The Chest of Drawers", but employed the power of my imagination to change it from a tea set to a coffee set, in an attempt, sadly misguided, to prevent an indignant outburst from Sue. Incidentally, the "Chest of Drawers" in the title was originally not a chest of drawers at all but a small occasional table, of the type common in the East Midlands immediately after the 2nd World War; I changed it from a small occasional table to a chest of drawers for reasons that I no longer remember, but which (knowing her!) may have had something to do with not wishing to upset my big sister Sue. For the purposes of fiction, in this particular novel I used my imagination to transform Sue into a cut-price washing-machine with an unreliable timing mechanism which the heroine, Meg, eventually throws away, for reasons I now forget.

My Aunt Phyl was a larger-than-life character. Some of my happiest moments as a child and, later, as a teenager, and, later still, as a young woman, and, some years on, as a middle-aged person, were spent watching Aunt Phyl eating her beloved digestive biscuits, one after the other, straight out of the packet. In my novel "The Empty Box" (1983), the second in my state-of-the-nation "Articles of Furniture" series, chronicling the greedy Thatcher years, I imaginatively turned those original digestive biscuits into garibaldi biscuits, using them as a symbol of something, I now forget what, though I now recall that Aunt Phyl had entertained little enthusiasm for raisins or dates, always preferring what she would call, in her inimitable way, "a nice plain biscuit".

Many an enjoyable evening spent with Aunt Phyl we fruitfully occupied in debating the pros and cons of the digestive biscuit over the garibaldi. There were, of course, arguments on both sides. Those who like dried fruit in their biscuits would probably opt for the garibaldi, while those who like a less eventful biscuit would no doubt go for the plain digestive. To add extra interest to our evenings (we both disapproved of the television set, though I am now fully prepared to watch serious documentaries of an educational nature) I once broke a packet of digestive biscuits (in those days available for three shillings and sixpence from the local store, Mannings of Stradbroke, if I remember correctly, and served, more often than not, by a man whose name I now forget, if ever I knew it) into irregular pieces, thus giving us hour upon hour of splendid diversion for six or more evenings as we pitted out wits against biscuits and attempted to reassemble them as a jigsaw, though, more often than not, with little success, regrettably.

Another game I used to enjoy playing with Aunt Phyl was one of our own invention. We called it "Numbers". I would think of a number between one and a hundred. Aunt Phyl would then have to guess what it was. On one memorable occasion, it took her 84 guesses before she came up with the correct number, which was 39! On another memorable occasion, it took her 72 guesses before she came up with the correct number, which was 51! After precisely an hour and a half, timed on a kitchen clock bought by my great-grandmother in Sheffield in 1876, we would switch roles, and it would be Aunt Phyl's turn to think of the number, and my turn to guess what it was. We always made a point of playing this game around a little low oblong table in the front room, even though the game did not require a table. I forget why.

My mother never forgave me for helping myself to an extra biscuit without asking her. It was on March 3rd 1949. "You really should have asked," she said to me, and then – typically – she changed the subject. I was only nine or ten years of age but those awful words wound me to this day. They were not only sexist – I was a little girl at the time – but they were also anti-biscuit. Sixty years on, whenever anyone offers me a biscuit, or if I am driving along a motorway and a car passes me in which someone happens to be eating a biscuit, I emit an involuntary shudder. I used this involuntary shudder in my novel "The Meaningful Silence", but I changed it into a nervous twitch, for reasons I no longer recall.

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER

HOW DID YOUR AUDITION FOR THE MOVIE PART GO, DARLING?
IT'S A GREAT PART BUT I DON'T THINK I GOT IT...
THIS CHARACTER GETS TO CONVEY THE WHOLE GAMUT OF HUMAN EMOTIONS IN THE FILM...
FANTASTIC!
BUT THEY SAID I WASN'T EXPRESSIVE ENOUGH...
HOW ANNOYING FOR YOU.
YEAH. I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD THE BOTOX THIS MORNING IF I'D KNOWN.

Literary Review

Cult cock-OUP

Scientology
Edited by James R. Lewis
(Oxford University Press, £18.99)

THE clock starts striking 13 very early in this book, which claims to consider Scientology from a standpoint of scholarly objectivity.

In the opening essay, "Birth of a Religion", J. Gordon Melton sets out "an overview of the life of L. Ron Hubbard anchored by the generally agreed facts". The general tone can be deduced from his conclusion: "After a suitable pause to acknowledge the founder's life and accomplishments, the church continued its forward march." In another chapter, David G. Bromley claims that "the basic outline of L. Ron Hubbard's life is not contested".

What poppycock. Scientologists believe that LRH was a war hero who fought in all five continents, a great thinker and a man true to his philosophy that modern psychiatric drugs are bad for you. The sceptics, with evidence, say that LRH lied about his war record, wrote pulp science-fiction books, then came up with a cock-and-bull story about Lord Xenu and the Thetans, called it a religion, made millions and died with his bottom pin-pricked with a psychiatric sedative used for anxiety-ridden geriatrics. Everything about Scientology's founder is contested, though no one reading this book would realise that.

Take the war record. In *Scientology*, Melton asserts that LRH's ship, sub-chaser PC815, did heroic work, sinking a Japanese sub off the coast of Oregon. Russell Miller's biography, *Bare-Faced Messiah*, tells a wholly different story. Miller, backed by US Navy records, says that a panicky Hubbard ordered depth charges against a blip on the radar caused by magnetic deposits on the seabed. A few months later, LRH's ship fired its three-inch guns at goats on uninhabited islands off Mexico. He was then relieved of his command, his admiral rating LRH "below average" and noting that he lacked "essential qualities of judgement, leadership and co-operation".

None of this merits a mention in the OUP's *Scientology*. Nor will you find Judge Breckenridge's ruling in the Los Angeles Superior Court in 1984: "The organisation clearly is schizophrenic and paranoid... its founder... virtually a pathological liar." Or Mr Justice Latey's ruling in the high court in London in the same year that Scientology was "immoral, socially obnoxious, corrupt, sinister and dangerous... because it is out to capture people and indoctrinate and brainwash them so that they become the unquestioning captives and tools of the cult".

Evidence of editorial mumbo-jumbo comes thick and fast. On page four, editor James R. Lewis lambasts an unnamed critic of Scientology for being a computer scientist rather than a sociologist or a religious studies scholar. Yet at the very end of the book there is an astonishingly uncritical essay entitled "Pastoral Care and 11 September: Scientology's Non-traditional Religious Contribution", co-authored by Justine Digance, who is a senior lecturer in, er, "tourism management" at Griffith University, Queensland, Australia. Digance praises Scientology's "own self-understanding" of its role at Ground Zero, quoting its claim that fire-fighters attributed their lack of injuries as they crawled over mountains of twisted steel to the "assists" received from volunteer ministers of Scientology.

No surprise there: far from being a neutral scholar, James Lewis is a veteran apologist for cults, or "new religions" as he prefers to style them. "Many of us in academia," he has said, "look on the anti-cultists as being far more dangerous to liberty than the so-called cults." Several contributors to *Scientology* worked on his previous white-washing jobs such as *Sex, Slander and Salvation* (1994), a sympathetic study of the Children of God (now rebranded as The Family), the cult notorious for child sexual abuse and "flirty fishing". Melton liked The Family so much he later appeared in a PR video for the sect, praising its "very positive view of sexuality".

After the lethal Sarin gas attacks on Tokyo subway passengers in 1995, Lewis flew to Japan to defend the Aum Supreme Truth cult, which had perpetrated the crime. He told an audience of disbelieving Japanese hacks that the cult was innocent and benign, a victim of religious persecution and police pressure. It could not have produced the Sarin used for the murders, he insisted. How did he know? The Aum Supreme Truth cultists had told him so. They also paid his airfare, hotel bill and living expenses.

Lewis seems never to have met a cult he didn't like. That's his prerogative. What is utterly mystifying is why one of the oldest and most respected publishing houses in the world chooses to give its imprimatur to this tendentious drivel. Did anyone at OUP read it before pressing the print button? "Certainly this book was peer-reviewed," an OUP spokesman assures the *Eye*, without revealing who the peers were. Lord Archer and Lord Black, perhaps?

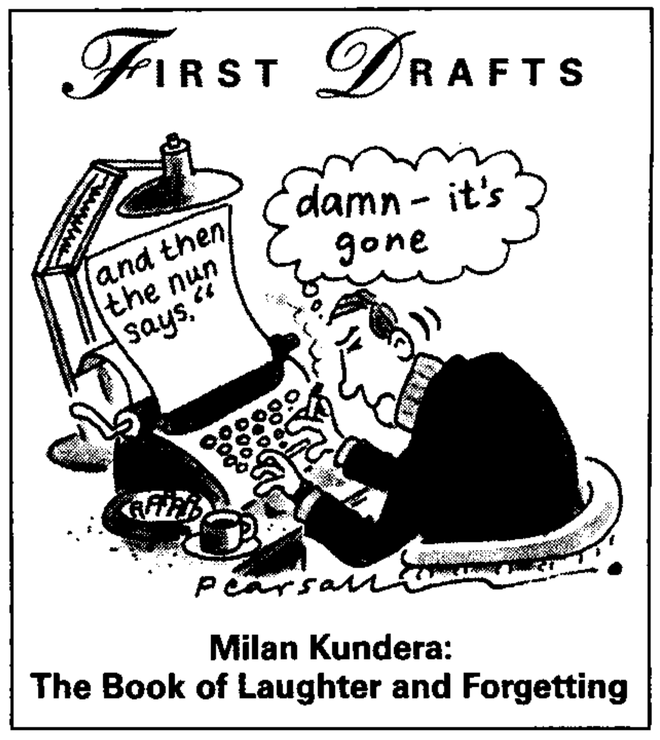
Nookie & Corners

The Women
TC Boyle
(Bloomsbury, £12.99)

TC Boyle currently lives in a house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, so his interest in writing a book about the great architect is perhaps easier to explain than his prurient delvings into the sexual behaviour of the "pioneering" sexual behaviourist, Dr Kinsey, in his earlier novel, *The Inner Circle* (see *Eye* 1128).

But it is one thing to live in a man's house; quite another to re-create his life and loves, which is what Boyle purports to do here with Frank Lloyd Wright. The problem for Boyle is that, as an architect, Wright was unique, and therefore uniquely interesting. But as a man, and especially in his sexual behaviour and relationships, he was unhappily no different from any other arrogant, opinionated, needy, attention-seeking egotist.

Yet it is on Wright's manhood, rather than his genius, that Boyle devotes the vast bulk of this long and repetitive novelisation. "He was one of those sexually charged men who couldn't live without a woman at the centre of his life." The result is that Wright, who was not a tall man, is barely glimpsed above



Milan Kundera:
The Book of Laughter and Forgetting

groin height, such is the concentration on the tune he dances to his own libido.

As with Kinsey in the *Inner Circle*, whose activities were depicted through the eyes of one of his researchers, Boyle approaches Wright through the device of a fictitious student who joined his architectural fellowship in the 1930s and who supposedly witnessed or learned about his master in sufficient detail to write it all down. The student, Tadashi Sato, is Japanese and one of the conceits of his narrative is that he constantly refers to Wright as "Wrieto-San", which soon grows tedious. But the book is written, or rather overwritten, in a florid, purple style quite at odds with the idea of a Japanese narrator, and this is apparently owing to the fact that Sato, now an old man, has allowed his recollections to be imaginatively worked up into the present novel by his young "translator", Seamus O'Flaherty.

All this seems a rather elaborate charade to excuse some thoroughly embarrassing prose: "*She read through the letter a second time, then a third, every nerve and fiber of her stirring with the highest regard for the nobility of this man, for his grace, his beauty, his truth and wisdom, and she immediately wrote back, and what she wrote was so deep and so true she might as well have opened a vein and written him in blood.*" There's a lot of this sort of stuff here, and it offers a jarring contrast to the clean simplicity of Wright's architecture (of which you get little sense in this book).

The story is told in three tranches, dealing in reverse chronological order with the women he installed in succession in his rural domain at Taliesin, Wisconsin. Wright had built the house (or "love bungalow" as the press called it) in 1911 as a home and studio, but also as a refuge from the censorious gossips of Oak Park, the suburb of Chicago where he had received so many of his early commissions.

Leaving his first wife Kitty and their five children in Oak Park, Wright had eloped to Germany in 1909 with his mistress, Mamah Borthwick Cheney. She was the wife of one of his patrons and a devotee of free love, but their relationship was anything but free, since it cost them both their reputations and had to be conducted on the run. In 1914, having eventually been installed in Taliesin, she was murdered, along with six others, by a mad axe-wielding cook. The local population, scandalised by the rela-

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
BRILLIANT IDEA, VINCE – TO WRITE ABOUT THE ECONOMIC CRISIS!
VINCE CABLE BOOK LAUNCH
VINCE CABLE THE STORM
WELL I CERTAINLY CAN'T AFFORD IT!
£14.99 – BIT STEEP!
RATHER STRAPPED FOR CASH I'M AFRAID
I'LL BORROW IT FROM SOMEONE ELSE

tionship, took this as a sign of divine retribution.

Yet within the year Wright, who had been away on business at the time of the murders, had fallen for a flaky temptress (sorry "Southern belle") and morphine addict by the name of Miriam Noel. Despite the objections of Wright's mother and housekeeper, she was soon installed as mistress of Taliesin and wife of Mr Wright.

When eventually he tired of her and (not having learned his lesson) took on another wife, Olgivanna Milanoff, they found themselves hounded and besieged not only by the press but also by an enraged (hell hath no fury, etc) and creatively litigious Miriam. By the time Miriam had resigned herself to defeat and settled her claims over Taliesin, Olgivanna had been reduced to a pale nervous shadow of the beautiful "dancer" who'd first ensnared (sorry, enchanted) the Master.

Every now and again there are glimpses of Wright in his studio, drawing, insisting on a particular type of pencil, ordering his acolytes and minions about; and famous buildings, such as the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, sometimes get a brief look-in. But for the most part, our view of Wright is of a man hastening to and fro to meet clients, fob off creditors, deal with his overbearing mother and bossy cooks and housekeepers, and either escape from or tryst with successive wives and lovers. You might get some idea of the communal life he led at Taliesin, surrounded by family, students, builders and craftsmen, but you get little idea of what was great about his architecture, or why it was so revolutionary and influential.

Bearing in mind Wright's dictum that "form and function are one", you wonder what exactly this book is for. No doubt a novel about architectural ideas wouldn't sell as well as one about a famous architect's tempestuous love life. Or perhaps Boyle was simply inspired by Kinsey's view that everything, in the end, er, boils down to sex.

Books & Bookmen

■ AN *EYE* reader visiting WHSmith reports half price stickers already adorning copies of *Jade: Fighting to the End, My Autobiography*.

No wonder – the £7.99 paperback, from John Blake Publishing, may look like new material, but is in fact a retitled and repackaged second edition of last year's *Jade: Catch a Falling Star*.

At least those caught out by the new cover into buying the same book twice won't have paid full price.

■ AT THE *Sunday Times*'s Oxford Literary Festival, an event flagged as "What's the big Conservative idea?" brought out Tory MP Ed Vaizey, blogger Iain Dale and Peter "Bonkers" Hitchens.

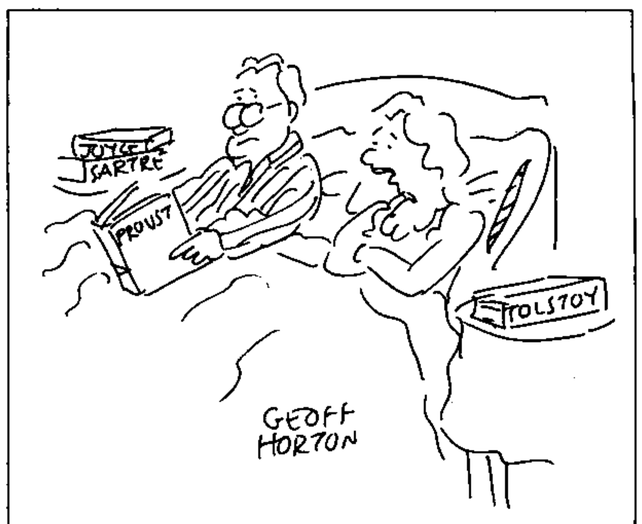
Vaizey pronounced himself against any such thing as a "big idea", citing big expenditure as an inevitable consequence. Hitchens had no such qualms and, standing up, pushed the microphone aside to bellow unaided his great idea: that the party should aim to lose the next election in the hope that from the ashes of the thus sacrificed careerist political know-nothings, a phoenix of "proper'" Conservatism may rise.

Opinion in the audience fell into two camps. "He's just mad, isn't he?" some concluded, while others pointed out in mitigation that "he does wear very fine suits". Vaizey's face was a picture, not unadjacent to something by Munch.

■ THE TV Galaxy Book Awards (once The Nibbies) at the Grosvenor House Hotel produced its usual clash of literary and popular culture.

The book people didn't seem to know who the celebs giving out the prizes were, and the celebs gave little indication that they knew who the authors were.

One thing, however, became clear to both groups. As nearly every single celeb mentioned to Richard and Judy in passing that they had an autobiography coming out later this year (Ant and Dec, of course, have a *joint* one), the publishing folk realised that some of their number might have joined the bandwagon a bit late and that the vast payouts to the celebs might now, as it turns out, generate rather less income than the reassuringly high-selling "real books" being applauded by the inky brigade. Next year publishers might be less able to afford the expensive dinner which one comic rather unkindly compared to "a Japanese airline meal tray".



"We just don't have any fun in bed..."

■ THE world's worst showbiz hack, Joe Mott, is tiring at last of the high life.

The *Daily Star* columnist – who proudly, if fleetingly, dated Girls Aloud singer Sarah Harding – is desperately trying to find a publisher for his novel. It's about the sexploits of an all-girl band who are hounded by a showbiz journalist groupie. As first-time novelists are often advised: write about what you know!

'Bookworm'

JUST FANCY THAT!

"Oborne is a muscular writer who values intellectual clarity." – Nick Cohen reviews Peter Oborne's *The Triumph of the Political Class*, *Observer*, 30 September 2007.

"Peter Oborne is an utterly mediocre man." – Nick Cohen at the Orwell Prize debate, 25 March 2009.

LIBRARY NEWS

■ CALDERDALE Central Library will have to be renamed Calderdale Out-of-the-Way Library if plans to bulldoze the building go ahead, say campaigners against the relocation.

The 26-year-old purpose-built and well-used library and its state-of-the-art archives are right in the middle of Halifax, near the town hall and easily reached by public transport. So far, so convenient.

But the council wants to move the public library (ie the computers and popular fiction) from the town centre into a smaller building in the planned flashy new "Broad Street" development, which is to feature a huge cinema, bowling alley, bingo hall, shops and flats. The current building will then be demolished and the site sold to make way for shops (a fat chance in the current retail property market).

But that's nothing compared to how inaccessible the archives, reference and schools library service will become if moved to Shaw Lodge Mills, as the council plans. The 19th century mill complex is outside the town centre and earmarked for an "urban village" development.

Campaigners say the move is a monumental waste of money – demolishing a building that would cost £10m to replace to a similar standard. With similar town centre developments suspended in Huddersfield, Wakefield and Bradford due to finance problems, maybe only the recession can save Calderdale Central Library.

"...some of my friends who are analytical and literary say I have become emblematic of a kind of sexual libertarianism that needn't be pejorative."

RUSSELL BRAND
Times online

I admire the Belgian artist Francis Alys. There is a wonderful video of him pushing an enormous ice block through Mexico City, until it is diminished to an ice cube. That work has everything – about something vanishing, about the effort of being a singular person in an enormous city.

SIOBHAN DAVIES,
Telegraph Magazine

Pseuds Corner

His most characteristic utterances are what he calls 'shining agates of negation.' 'I would like to live in a perpetual September. One does one's best to prefer Spring, in vain.' The timing of the comma that begs for a pause before 'in vain' is almost worth the price* of the volume.

JONATHAN BATE on The Letters of Samuel Beckett, *Sunday Telegraph*
*£30

[Neil] Tennant, hugely erudite, enormously witty and a little haughty, might be pop's answer to Stephen Fry. His answer to a question about a single lyric on *Yes* variously takes in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, Tony Blair's final speech to the House of Commons ("He flounced off, didn't he?"), the Kerensky government's evacuation to the Urals of Tsar Nicholas, T.S. Eliot, the Iraq war, a childhood holiday to Fort William, Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery, and the Carphone Warehouse...'

ALEXIS PETRIDIS on the Pet Shop Boys, *Guardian*

This is not a jersey. This is a portal through which men pass. This is not material. This is fabric that binds us together. This is not a souvenir. This is a reminder of all who have worn it before us. This is not black. This is the absence of fear. This is not a uniform. This is a country unified. This is not a jersey only 22 men wear. This is a jersey fitted for four million people. This is victory and loss, but it will not be defeated. This is everything but a jersey.

Adidas advert for the new All Blacks jersey.

In the end, clothes have to reflect what's happening in the world, you start there and then you dream the rest.

DRIES VAN NOTEN,
FT Weekend

CONTRIBUTORS: Robert Galgut, Mark Solon, Stefan Leszczuk, Richard Cooper, Tom Beaty, Simon Howard.

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

GORDON'S GREAT TAX HAVEN CLAMPDOWN

It's dodgy business as usual

THE much-vaunted clampdown on tax havens – the "beginning of the end" for them, claimed Gordon Brown – is in fact about as great a victory as the tax avoidance industry could have hoped for at the G20.

Tax havens will be expected to sign a dozen "tax information exchange agreements" to secure an all-clear from the body policing the deal, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). That will allow a haven back into the fold while *not* exchanging information on tax dodging with around 200 or so countries. Some clampdown!

Moreover, havens have merely committed to do this, not actually done it. Eighteen tax havens made such commitments as long ago as 2002 and between them have signed just, er, 18 agreements in nine years.

Even when agreements are signed they are useless. A new study from the *Tax Justice Network* quotes the leading expert on the subject: "Information exchange under the standard agreement is sporadic, difficult, and unwieldy for tax administrators even under the best of circumstances. When a banking haven is the requested party, information exchange is nearly impossible."

There are a number of reasons for this, not least that a country has to ask for information on named tax dodgers with details of their schemes, when the very nature of the problem is secrecy, and that tax haven authorities (such as they are) tend not to know who has accounts in their territory and certainly don't employ people to dish the dirt. Nor do the agreements touch the multi-billion pound legal ruses using tax havens deployed by multinational companies.

HM Customs & Revenue (HMRC) in Britain can already ask for information from its nearest havens including Guernsey and Jersey, but oddly has so far been unable to tell the *Eye* how much it has obtained (insiders say bugger all). It did reveal that an agreement with Bermuda signed in December has to date yielded, er, zilch.

The G20 outcome is great for the politicians who can hail a multilateral success, but even better news for the havens and their wealthy clients. Tax officials will be plunged into negotiating worthless agreements for years while meaningful sanctions are postponed for another generation or so.

TAXMEN AND LAWYERS

They're still oil right

BRITAIN's enforcer in the supposed clampdown is HMRC's tough-talking tax boss Dave Hartnett (pictured). He has already boasted of having "smoking guns, smoking howitzers" in his fight against offshore dodgers using Liechtenstein.

But while the G20 was announcing its anti-haven plan, the *Eye*, using freedom of information laws, obtained a heavily-censored copy of the "STEPS" contract under which HMRC rents its offices from Guernsey-based property group Mapeley following a 2001 PFI deal that transferred 600 public buildings to the Bermudan tax resident company Mapeley Steps Ltd (*Eyes passim*).

And whose signature should be on the bottom of the contract? Those who remember the saga might think it would have been the hapless Revenue chairman of the time, Sir Nicholas Montagu, who took the flak over a deal that had the public accounts committee lamenting "a very serious blow for the Inland Revenue to have entered into a contract with tax avoiders".

But no. The man signing the country's tax offices over to a tax-exempt shell company 3,500 miles away in the middle of the Atlantic was none other than the new scourge of tax havens everywhere… Dave Hartnett!

THE city's amply-remunerated lawyers will certainly be satisfied with the G20's tax haven cop-out.

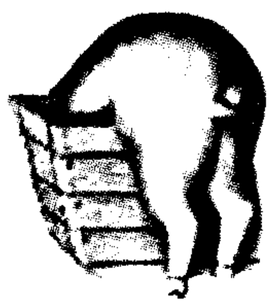
On the eve of the G20, Allen & Overy partner Miles Walton bleated that "tax havens have also played a helpful and beneficial part in the world of international finance and investments – and they can continue to do so. They are the oil which enables many uncontroversial financial and commercial transactions to run smoothly…"

Presumably the kind of "uncontroversial" deals Walton had in mind include the calamitous "Granite" offshore securitizations that funded Northern Rock until its collapse. And which law firm set these up? Yep, Allen & Overy.

JUNKETING

Passport to Pimm's

ACCORDING to Bill Crothers, commercial director of the Identity and Passport Service (IPS): "It is relationships that make or break programmes." As he explains: "Socialising is important so you understand your partners as people." Yeah, right.



One suit at the IPS who has taken Crothers' message to heart and selflessly schmoozed in the interests of, er, identity and passports is service delivery director Bernard Herdan. As the *Eye* has discovered using freedom of information laws, his favourite host was banknote and passport printer De La Rue.

In 2006 and 2007 the firm treated Herdan to a day at the Wimbledon tennis championships – semis in 2006, then an upgrade to the Federer-Nadal final in 2007. Last September IPS placed De La Rue on the shortlist for new passports under the government's identity scheme.

Other schmoozers who are either already on the IPS payroll or very keen to get there included: Capita (three dinners and an opera); Logica (one dinner and two Chelsea flower shows); as well as Siemens, Fujitsu, ATOS and Ernst & Young. Full details of these indispensable outings are now on the IPS website.

Crothers was also true to his word, seemingly incapable of meeting his favourite consultants at Deloitte without a plate of food in front of him, taking four dinners at unspecified locations in the space of five months.

F35 FIGHTER

Royal Navy all at sea

EXCITING news for what's left of the Royal Navy: defence secretary John Hutton has announced that "the first of the UK's next generation of supersonic stealth fast jets are to be purchased by the MoD".

In fact just three new Joint Strike fighters have been bought by the Ministry of Defence for a whopping £2bn; and they will be tested for use on two new super aircraft carriers that have yet to be built. The cost of the Joint Strike scheme with Lockheed Martin has so far cost the US and Britain $41bn, but as night follows day this will rise significantly.

There are already problems with the "unrivalled" fighter, known as the F35, a replacement for the Harrier. They have such powerful engines, one burned a hole through a carrier deck during previous tests. They also carry no internal cannon, which is a handicap as they are meant to assume the Harrier's close air support role. Nor are they as stealthy as one might imagine. They cannot accommodate the latest air-to-air or air-to-surface missiles internally, so these have to be slung under the wings or airframe, spoiling the lines of a truly stealthy aircraft.

For the time being, then, the F35s will have to be fitted with older, less capable ordnance and practise on other people's aircraft carriers. So what's the point of them? They are, in fact, a political purchase.

The Royal Navy has been losing influence within the MoD for years now, along with many of its ships in strategic defence reviews. It's also seen the RAF take a big slice of the defence budget to pay for the Eurofighter/Typhoon project, which won't be coming anywhere near the navy or the Fleet Air Arm. But the navy still wants its two new super-carriers and thinks there is a greater chance of seeing them built if it has the new aircraft to put on them.

'Squarebasher'

GOVERNMENT IT

EDS in sand

WHEN the IT company EDS was handed the contract to bring all three armed forces' payrolls together five years ago, the *Eye* made the wild prediction that "squaddies might want to start checking their payslips a bit more carefully". In fact things have turned out far worse than followers of EDS's pisspoor record could have predicted.

"It is difficult to exaggerate the magnitude of the failure of the joint personnel administration [JPA] programme," laments parliament's defence select committee, introducing a familiar tale of growing costs and cock-ups. Barely anybody in the services seems to have received the right pay; and £29m in overpayments have had to be recovered. As a result, the National *Audit Office (NAO) has* qualified the Ministry of Defence's annual report.

Although the problems stem from EDS's failure to understand the MoD's basic need to know that the right payments had gone to the right people (who would have thought a payroll system had to do that!), taxpayers cannot expect adequate compensation. A "failure charge" of just £500,000 could be clawed back against payments to EDS of £69m in the first year of the JPA's operation.

At the root of the latest screw-up was the decision in 2004 to simply hand EDS this major deal as the extension of an existing contract, without competition, reflecting the closeness between the MoD and the firm (the next year EDS won a £4bn deal to overhaul all defence IT and is a key member of the consortium set to privatise military training). The armed forces minister who thought this was a good deal for his servicemen and women, Adam Ingram, is now a consultant with… EDS.

CONTRACT PUBLISHING

Elite farces

DAVID CRACKNELL, former political editor of the *Sunday Times*, recently set up his own PR consultancy, Big Tent Communications, which offers clients "innovative, bespoke solutions to their communications needs". And what could be more innovative or bespoke than the sudden rush of online press releases from Big Tent on behalf of a contract publisher named Oskar Keysell?

"Oskar Keysell/Elite Publishing announce 2009 British and Irish Lions Rugby Tour Magazine," it trumpeted on 28 March. Two days later came another thrilling bulletin: "Oskar Keysell/Elite Publishing announce BUPA Teddies Nurseries *Parents* Magazine."

Not very newsworthy, given that Elite has been publishing the magazine for a couple of years; but it does achieve one purpose. Anyone thinking of doing business with Keysell (pictured) will now find these PR puffs at the top of the list if they do an online search, and may miss a little item that has been shunted down the Google pecking order: a court report about Keysell's drug-bust last December. He tried to hide his cocaine and ecstasy in a bush after being stopped by PC Knacker in the Kings Road, Chelsea, but to no avail.

Does David Cracknell know what he has taken on? Besides his drug habit, Keysell also has a habit of using the company's money to pay his personal debts and subsidise his chaotic love-life, in which good-time girls from Brazil loom large. (Some of them display their charms in nude photos on his desktop computer in Elite's seedy offices, above platform one of Paddington station.) His long-suffering partner in the business, Warren Hayward, has banned him from withdrawing cash or taking company credit cards out of the office.

Keysell's cavalier attitude is also evident in some of his business practices. Last summer, for example, Elite was looking for advertisers in the launch issue of *Elixir*, a glossy mag devoted to "beauty, wellness and anti-ageing" which promised an initial print-run of 250,000. DaySoft, the contact lens company, agreed to buy a full-page ad. Fraser Hendry of DaySoft was surprised soon afterwards to see an online press release giving *Elixir*'s circulation as 100,000. He wrote to Oskar Keysell. "The distribution is now back up to 250k," Keysell reassured him on 6 October, when the mag appeared.

Hendry was still puzzled. The advert seemed to have elicited no response, whereas even an unsuccessful ad would normally be expected to "register at least low level customer orders". He asked for some proof that 250,000 copies were printed. He never got it, but eventually – after much wrangling – received a "proportionate refund" on the basis that the print-run had been reduced to 100,000. "I'm pretty sure the distribution was much lower," he says, "from the conversion rate we got." He's right: the *Eye* has evidence that only 5,000 copies of *Elixir* were distributed, even though advertisers had shelled out for a mag with sales of 100,000 or even 250,000.

An aberration? Perhaps not. Something similar happened with *Buying Abroad*, a foreign-property supplement produced by Elite that was distributed with the *Sunday Telegraph* in May and September last year. According to the media pack which Elite used to lure in advertisers, *Buying Abroad* would reach "a readership of 1.2m within London and the South". Glenda Watson of Kruger Real Estate, one of the advertisers who succumbed, urged her friends and clients in London and the South-East to buy the paper on 11 May, the date of the first insert. Not one of them could find *Buying Abroad*. And no wonder: Elite had in fact printed only 100,000 copies.

A few months later Elite published another *Sunday Telegraph* insert, a guide to "essential solution providers" titled *Business Minds*. "The *Sunday Telegraph* is one of the most trusted and respected titles in the Sunday market with 1.8m readers," Elite told potential advertisers. "*Business Minds* will attract a high degree of interest from this business specific audience. Readership will be to 1.8m nationally via a split run on 21 September."

When some advertisers later complained to Oskar Keysell that the supplement hadn't been in their copy of the paper, he insisted that the phrase "split run" made it clear that not every *Telegraph* reader would receive the insert. He wisely omitted to mention how many copies had actually been printed: again, a mere 100,000. How this can be reconciled with his promise of a readership "to 1.8m" is hard to fathom.

Still, Elite must be a pretty reputable outfit: it also arranges the ad sales and production of *National Geographic Traveler*, a thrice-yearly magazine distributed to British readers of the *National Geographic*. "The audience is the most important factor," the Elite website boasts, "and this is the key to the sure success of this initiative." But it's not a success in which Elite will share for much longer: the next issue, due in June, will be the final one to emerge from Oskar Keysell's eyrie at Paddington station. "That will be the last bit of business we do with Elite," says David Middis, UK sales director of *National Geographic*. "Our contract with them is now finished." Why? "There were various reasons."

Last November, the *Eye* has learned, Middis complained to Elite about the dodgy methods used by Keysell's salespersons in flogging adverts for the magazine. Might this by any chance be related to his termination of the contract? "I'd rather not comment on that," he says.

RRS DISCOVERY

Abandon ship! Abandon ship!

EVEN though the UK's 47-year-old research ship RRS Discovery keeps breaking down, leaving scientific expeditions dead in the water, the government has just stopped the order for a replacement.

A new ship was to have been built in Spain; but the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) decided the pound's collapse against the euro meant the replacement was going to cost too much.

NERC told the Eye the procurement exercise had "concluded with the preferred supplier being European and wishing to bid in euros"; and a statement to the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) in Southampton, home of the Royal Research Ships, said the deal was aborted "predominantly because of the high additional cost associated with the currently poor pound-euro exchange rate".

But why was the ship procured in euros in the first place? The Ministry of Defence, another government department that buys ships, has strict guidelines that "all contracts involving the supply of goods and services from overseas should contain FIRM prices denominated in sterling." When buying in local currency is unavoidable, the MoD says the tenderer should buy forward exchange rate cover against currency fluctuations.

Meanwhile, as one oceanographer told Nature magazine recently, the Discovery is "liable to fall apart at any moment". There is a long list of scientists waiting to carry out work at sea, and it's getting longer as expeditions have to be restarted due to breakdowns. To make matters worse, Nature also recently reported that the NOC's other, newer vessel, the RRS James Cook, is plagued by microbubbles on the hull, which make it "non-ideal" for operating sensitive acoustic equipment.

NERC insists the Discovery's replacement isn't cancelled and the project team will "[look] at all possible timings, costs and options, and then pursue the replacement". But even if money is available again soon, NERC will have to start the procurement process all over again, making it several years before a new ship is built.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Slamming the Gatehouse

A SPECIAL school that used excessive restraint on children for three years was still granted "specialist" status for its handling of behavioural problems by the government. The brutal regime at Gatehouse School, Milton Keynes, also received satisfactory Ofsted reports for both its education and its care of boarders, despite employing staff who had not been vetted.

A damning independent report on the school was produced last month for MK council by Kathryn Stone, chief of the learning disabilities charity Voice UK, detailing what really went on at the school.

The report found that Gatehouse, which has around 60 day pupils and 18 boarders with social, behavioural and emotional difficulties, had used excessive restraint as a "first resort" between 2005 and 2008. This involved up to six teachers manhandling boys and sitting on them until they calmed down – which often involved blacking out. The headteacher and deputy were suspended last October.

While Ofsted's one-day inspections are announced in advance and bound to find teachers and managers on best behaviour, the problems were there to be found in the school's paperwork, according to Stone's report. It notes that: "Any semblance of responsible, safe recruitment and selection practices seems to have by-passed Gatehouse School until very recently." Qualifications and criminal records had not been checked. Yet, the report adds: "Ofsted inspected the school in 2006 and reported favourably on the school's management. However, the recruitment of staff was apparently as fundamentally flawed in 2006 as it was in 2008. It is surprising that such a serious defect was not identified."

Last June the school was granted specialist status and given an extra £100,000 of funding from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, to spend on vocational classes as a reward for its good practice. Head teacher Suzanne Bell, who was suspended a few months later, told local papers at the time that their successful application for specialist status showed what could be done "with a good team of staff".

Stone's comments on the granting of this status are withering. "Given the limitations in staff training in [dealing with emotional and behavioural difficulties – the area of specialism], concerns expressed by social workers and others about the regime at the school, complaints by parents and evident lack of consideration of approaches other than restraint, it is difficult to see how the school came to achieve this specialist status," she writes. What value can specialist status have, if a school like Gatehouse can achieve it?

Parents had indeed made a string of official complaints to social workers who passed them to managers at the "highest possible levels". One of those who fielded complaints from parents was former chair of the school's governors, Sandra Clarke – who has since become MK's cabinet member with responsibility for children's services. She accepted assurances from senior officials that there were "no serious issues".

The abuse was only officially recognized last September, when a new temporary manager spotted something was amiss and sent senior teaching staff home on "leave". Clarke refuses to resign and her unimpressive leader, Isobel McCall, has passed up the opportunity to sack her. The Audit Commission has branded Clarke's department as officially pisspoor with an official rating of one star - one of the four worst in the country.

The council appears to believe the matter closed. It isn't. A case review into a 15-year-old pupil who hanged himself in his bedroom a year ago blamed a "culture of bullying and deceit within the school perpetuated by the head downwards."

In the City

"Equitable Life policyholders may now have to wait until the New Year to hear whether the government intends to compensate them for the losses caused by regulatory failure. Any day now, though, Equitable's auditors, Ernst & Young, are expected to hear bad news from the beancounters' Joint Disciplinary Scheme tribunal, which held hearings earlier this year into their failure to spot the guaranteed-annuity black hole that brought the company to its knees. The tribunal is expected to find against E&Y and to impose a large fine." (*Eye* 1226, December 2008.)

WELL, we know now the government has cynically kicked the expensive compensation issue into the long grass with yet another inquiry, further postponing any decision while it waits for more Equitable victims to die, thereby reducing any future bill. But what of the JDS tribunal? Since our prediction in December, a dense fog of secrecy has descended over the disciplinary proceedings brought against E&Y and two former partners involved in the Equitable audit, Paul McNamara and Richard Combes.

"I shall adopt the rightful position of great Labour economists of the past..."

The JDS first lodged complaints against E&Y and the two auditors in September 2004 for producing unqualified audit opinions from 1990 to 2000, failing to understand Equitable's business and failing to act with independence and objectivity. Equitable all but collapsed in 2000 after it was faced with a potential liability of at least £1.5bn.

However, the tribunal proceedings were suspended in November 2004 pending the outcome of Equitable's abortive civil claim against its auditors, which ended in 2005 when the insurers dropped their negligence claim and walked away with only an estimated £45m legal bill. E&Y had failed in an earlier 2002 bid to delay the JDS investigation until after the civil case.

So what is going on? We cannot tell you.

A SECOND and bigger group of nine senior escapees from the Serious Farce Office duly left at the end of March. These included three former assistant directors – prosecutors Graham More and Philip Lewis and head accountant Stephen Low. Also going were Julian Parker, described by the SFO only earlier that month as one of its "most experienced investigators", and Emma Lindsay, who with More successfully prosecuted those behind the Independent Insurance collapse, one of the SFO's two big wins in 2008. This latest exodus – following a cull of assistant directors and other senior officials last year – followed the provision of further finance from the Treasury for very generous golden parachutes.

The departures are the consequence of new director Richard "Grey Man" Alderman's policy of reshaping the SFO in the wake of last year's highly critical De Grazia report, which branded the SFO as a failing organisation. These changes have seen the decapitation of the top level of the SFO leadership under former director Robert Wardle. Five of the six former prosecution division heads have now gone.

Lewis and Parker ran the long-running Operation Holbein prosecution of generic drug companies and executives for alleged price-fixing of supplies to the NHS, which was finally killed for legal reasons by the appeal court in December. Alderman was no fan of the case and so felt vindicated by the outcome. His wish not to appeal against the initial decision by the trial judge to throw out the case is said to have been opposed by More and other senior prosecutors.

More, Lewis and another former assistant director, Roddy Gillanders, were asked to apply for one of the three "head of expert domain" posts – part of the new Alderman command structure. The job went to a lawyer who is on temporary secondment from a City firm.

"...such as... er... Denis Healey..."

Just how former SFO directors view the changes Grey Man has made since his arrival almost a year ago can be judged from the remarkable fact that his three immediate predecessors – Wardle, Ros Wright and George Staple – all attended the leaving party, while Alderman did not. Probably a wise call. But then he did make it clear on arrival that he was opposed to the SFO's "drinking culture".

JERSEY'S chief minister, Terry Le Sueur, has been vocal in defending the septic isle's record for openness – unlike all those bad offshore tax havens. So he was no doubt pleased that Jersey found itself on the "white" list of those offshore financial centres that had "substantially implemented" the tax standard guidelines set down by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

It is interesting then to find Terence Augustin Le Sueur listed – along with the Jersey-registered Grant Thornton Stonehage (formerly Clarendon Trust) – as the major shareholders in Thames Estuary Airport Company (TEAC). which is pushing for a new £30bn London airport on an artificial island in the estuary.

TEAC declared in its 2005 accounts, when Le Sueur et al were the largest shareholders, that its ultimate parent was the Flamingo Trust, which

The Alistair Darling Buds of May

was incorporated in Jersey. By the time of the 2007 accounts filed this year, this had changed to the Flamingo Humanitarian Foundation, also in Jersey.

Le Sueur did not mention TEAC in a statement of interests filed with the Jersey States or parliament in December 2005. No doubt because he and accountants Grant Thornton – Terry is a retired accountant – are merely nominees for the offshore beneficial owners. He described his work as including "providing occasional professional services, including trusteeships" and listed no fewer than six trusts of which he is a trustee. And one of those was the Flamingo Trust.

When asked about TEAC and Flamingo, the Jersey chief minister replied: "No comment. I am not prepared to talk about that at all."

As they say in Jersey – all perfectly open, transparent and above board.

PLANET FOOTBALL

Hull City

EQUALLY open, transparent and above board are the arrangements whereby the Premier League club is said to be controlled by another Jersey nominee company, Isis Nominees, which would appear to be linked to the accountants Baker Tilly.

Isis is said to be the ultimate controlling party of Tiger Holdings, which acquired the club in June 2007. Hull City has yet to produce its accounts for 2008 and the first accounts for Tiger are overdue – they should have been filed in February. No doubt when they are, they will explain the relationship between Isis and Hull directors Paul Duffen, Martin Walker and Russell Bartlett.

Arsenal

WHAT lies behind the fact that director and major shareholder Danny Fiszman retains a charge over the 5,000 shares he sold last month to American Stan Kroenke for £42.5m tax-free?

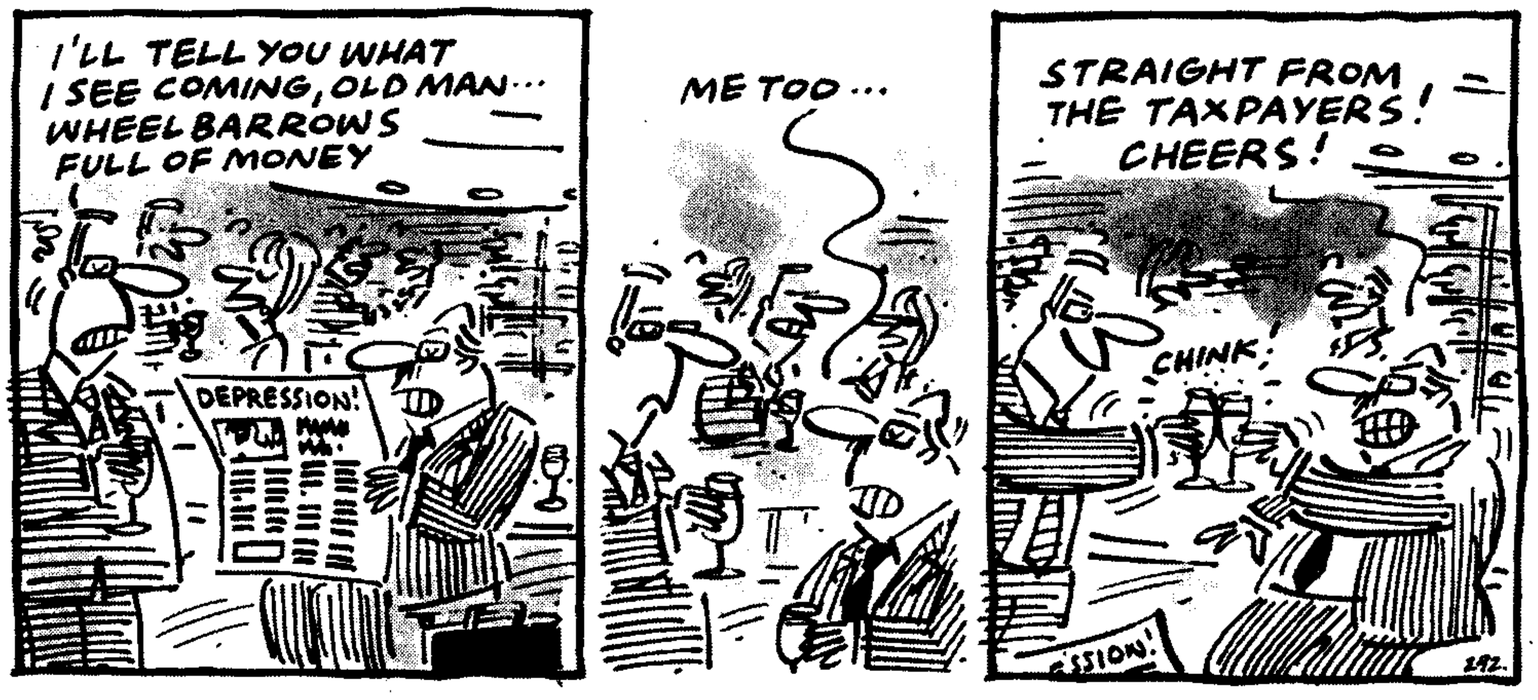
One answer is that Stan the Man has not paid in full and so Fiszman holds the charge as security until full payment by 2011 or in the event of non-payment in these uncertain times. The deal makes Kroenke the second biggest shareholder at 20.5 percent after Russian Alisher Usmanov with 25 percent; but he too has suffered from the credit crunch. Fiszman – a tax exile in Switzerland – still holds 16 percent. Why did Fiszman sell on HP? To lock in the juicy premium at £8,500 a share.

But who will vote the ex-Fiszman shares while Stan the Man has not paid in full? And if he cannot pay now, what does it say about his financial muscle regarding the ability to buy more shares in the face of a bid from Usmanov or a third party or if he and Fiszman want to buy out Lady Nina Bracewell-Smith's near 16 percent?

Any purchase that takes Fiszman, Kroenke, Usmanov or any combination of them over 30 percent would trigger a full bid which it seems none can afford or wants. So how would either Kroenke or Usmanov resist a knockout bid from an outside purchaser of the Bracewell-Smith stake? The supposed directors' plus Nina's share lock-down, designed to keep out Usmanov, would evaporate unless the participants could match the offer. Which, given the current state of financial play off the Emirates pitch, looks unlikely. And

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE & RIGG



who knows? Perhaps even Kroenke and Usmanov would welcome the ability to cash out big time to a Gulf or Asian buyer!

Fulham

THE phoney pharaoh Mohamed Fayed is a borrower from no fewer than three banks which have been rocking and rolling with the global financial crisis: RBS, Fortis in Belgium / Holland and Irish Nationwide Building Society.

This may explain why last month Harrods (UK) – which is the store's immediate parent company and has long covered the Fulham FC payroll – obtained the security of a debenture over the club's property and other assets such as TV rights to cover a loan agreement for £18.5m made to the club in December. Recent events may also explain why there were also deeds of priority to be effected relating to the loans from Fortis (2007) and INB (2008) which are still outstanding. The loan to Fulham has been guaranteed by Fayed. RBS is owed more than £700m by Harrods and the Paris Ritz.

"CAPITAL available for loans and joint venture financing – UK or overseas. Company rescue/restructuring. Letters of credit. Project finance & construction. Development finance. All commercial loans including MBOs".

This tempting ad in these uncertain and difficult banking times ran in none other than the *Financial Times* on 17 February. The offer of funding came from "Gresham Est 1958".

Any hard-pressed would-be borrower is unlikely to have been successful in obtaining any finance. For Gresham has been a front for serial financial fantasist "Lord" Eddie Davenport, who bought the company through a Nevis company in 2005. Davenport had previously been behind two collapsed property companies – Capricorn Group (£48m) in 2003 and Southern Cross Group (£20m) in 2005.

Since the *Eye* exposed the Davenport/Gresham link in August 2007, little has changed. No accounts have been filed since those for 2006 – in which the supposed auditors declared that their signature had been forged. The company was due to have filed accounts last July but has still not done so. And the two directors listed on the latest annual return filed in December have both resigned, Suzanne Ross three months before the date of the return and Peter Riley a month later. The only remaining director is stated to be an Italian-based Romanian.

Davenport has been on the radar of the Companies Investigation Branch of the old Department of Timidity & Inaction over Southern Cross, Gresham and Centurion (Private Equity), which was wound up last year. Davenport has also appeared on the SFO radar. But there has been no action by any law enforcement agency since the DTI and police raid on his London office and home in 2006.

So well done to the *FT* for promoting such an obvious public benefactor.

'Slicker'

G20 NUMBER CRUNCHING

$1,100bn "Additional resources... available to the world economy through the International Monetary Fund and other institutions" following the G20, according to Gordon Brown

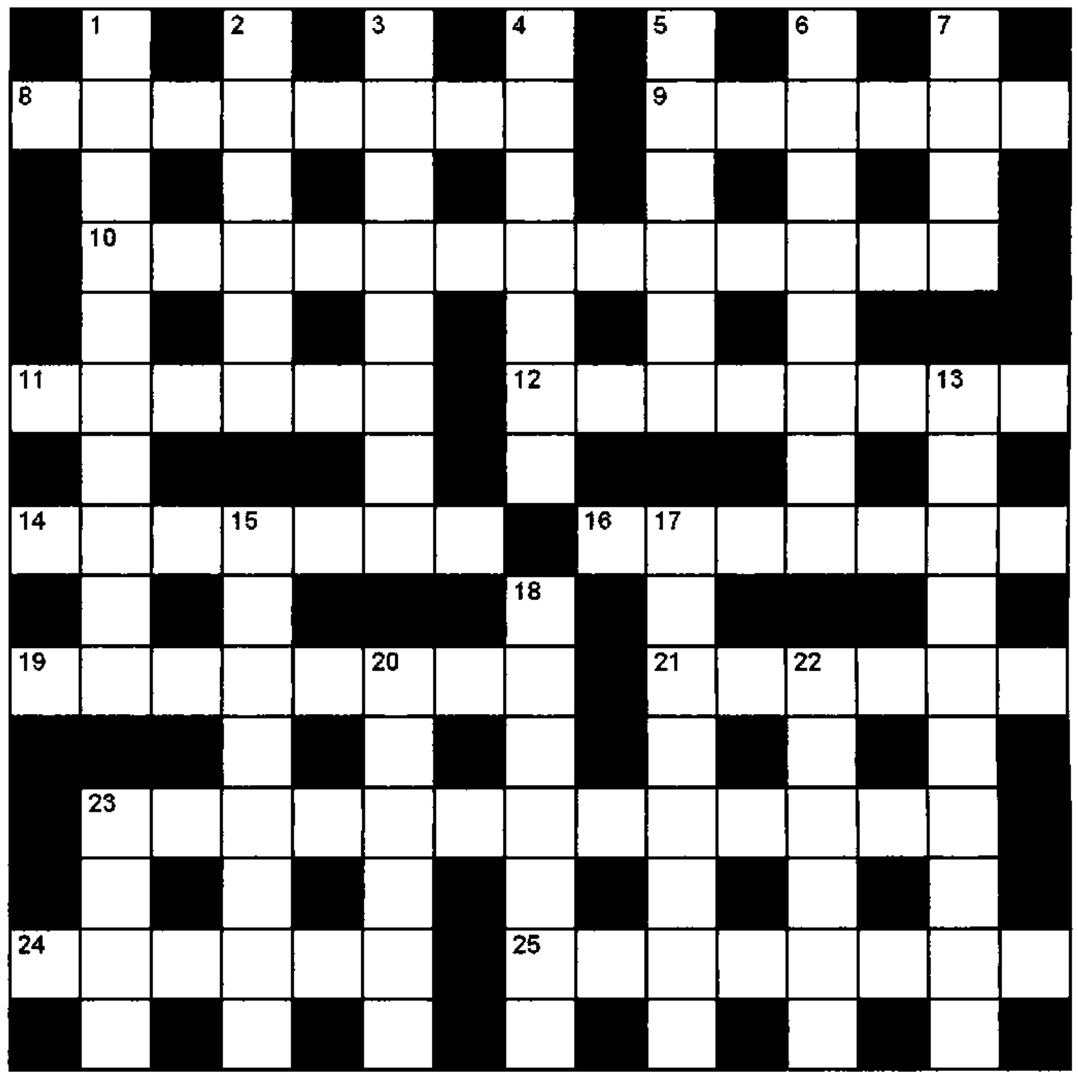
$204bn Amount actually committed by G20 countries so far

$0.4bn Amount committed by UK government so far

$0.0bn Amount of the UK's commitment that hasn't already been announced

EYE CROSSWORD 389

by Cyclops



£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 24 April 2009

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk

ACROSS

8 Churchmen against replacing first of medieval organs (8)
9 Climax of business exec. grabbing Mrs Mop's tops (6)
10 Rocky is clean-limbed, as featured in the *Eye* (8,5)
11 Financier's first bad loss – "One must get stuck in, old thing!" (6)
12 Medicine makes the organ subside, getting small (3-5)
14 Prince not right about off-colour Clinton? (7)
16 Pap producer after Sky's top dish (7)
19 Having sex, whatsits in good (8)
21 Sleazy bugger has way with Cyclops (6)
23 Might Labour, to reveal what undermined the Blair-Brown relationship? (5,8)
24 They're rolled in in bits (6)
25 Work together? Clinton's guts react badly! (8)

DOWN

1 Time's against Brown, lacking Washington's lead – "I most upset a player" (10)
2 Two ways Cameron familiarly stands up and ducks the question? (6)
3 Insistent type, Bill, when straddling Lewinsky's head (8)
4 "End of Obama!" – tabloid gets embarrassed retraction axed? (7)
5 Not without purpose, having what it takes to go after Bush's guts (6)
6 Begs Brown to reverse new role (is on the outside) (8)
7/23dn. Crappy beer given to the underprivileged (8)
13 Palin's opening official address reveals what she covets? (10)
15 Didn't put away all the chicken Labour party traditionalists? (4,4)
17 Be a typical tabloid reporter? Male, screwed up – quite so! (8)
18 Say "love a tumble: it's good for one's self-esteem" (3,4)
20 Elected king, ex-President loses lead in a sudden surge (6)
22 *Eye* shows cardinal, say, holding mock erection (6)
23 See 7dn.

Crossword 388 winner: EILEEN HOLROYD

ACROSS: 8 In the bag 9 Brunei 11 Hoard 12 Loudmouth 13 Tiepolo 14 Pudenda 16 Up-the-skirt-shots 19 Bounder 21 Gielgud 23 Lock horns 25 Sarah 27 Fatima 28 Heirloom.

DOWN: 1/10 High jump 2 Strafe 3 Head-to-head 4 Ballcock 6 Innuendo 7 Tight-arsed 13 Thumb a lift 15 Dispensary 17 Truncate 18 Register 20 Rare 22 Gordon 24/5/26 Home from home.

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7th May 2009

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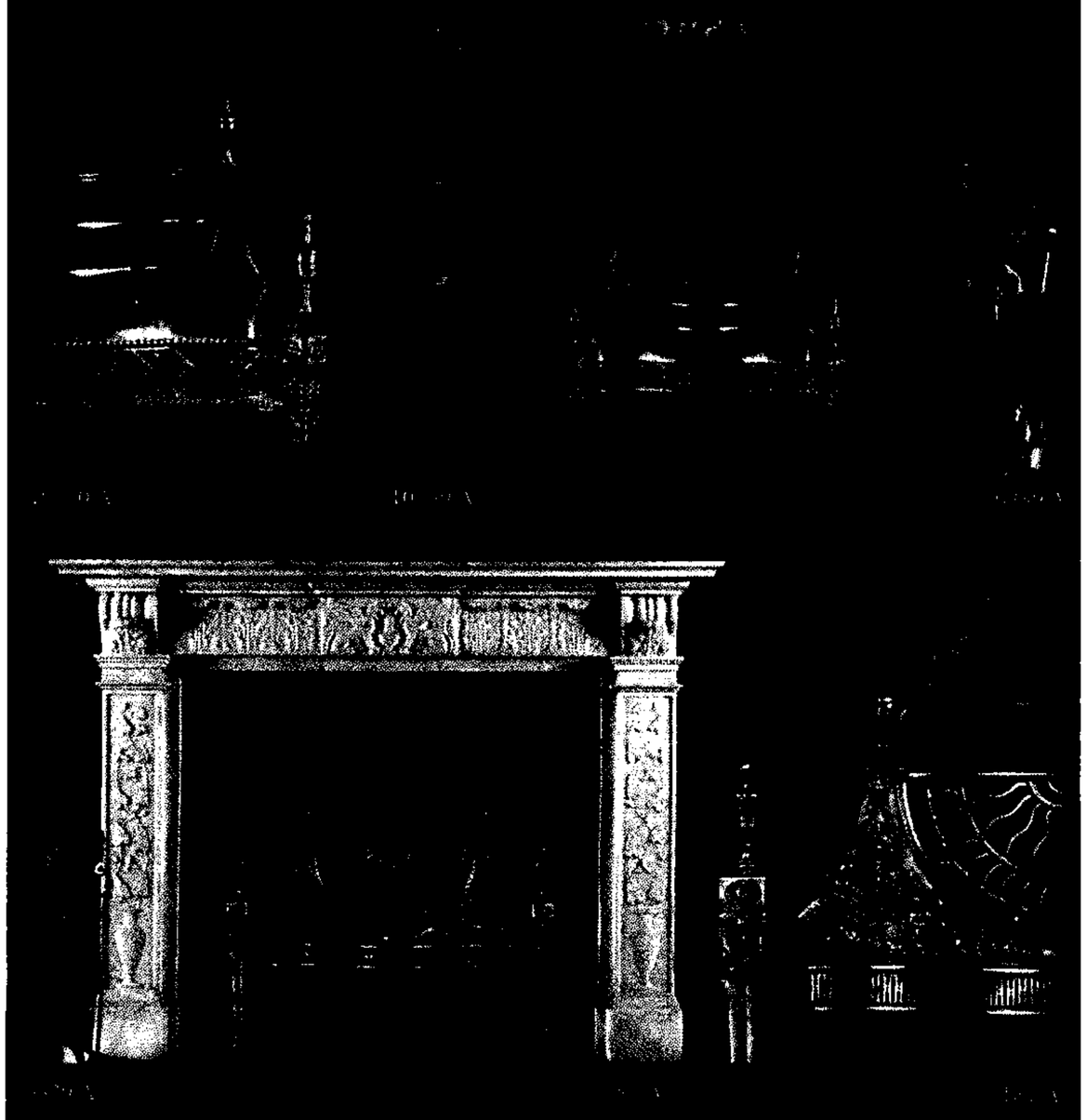

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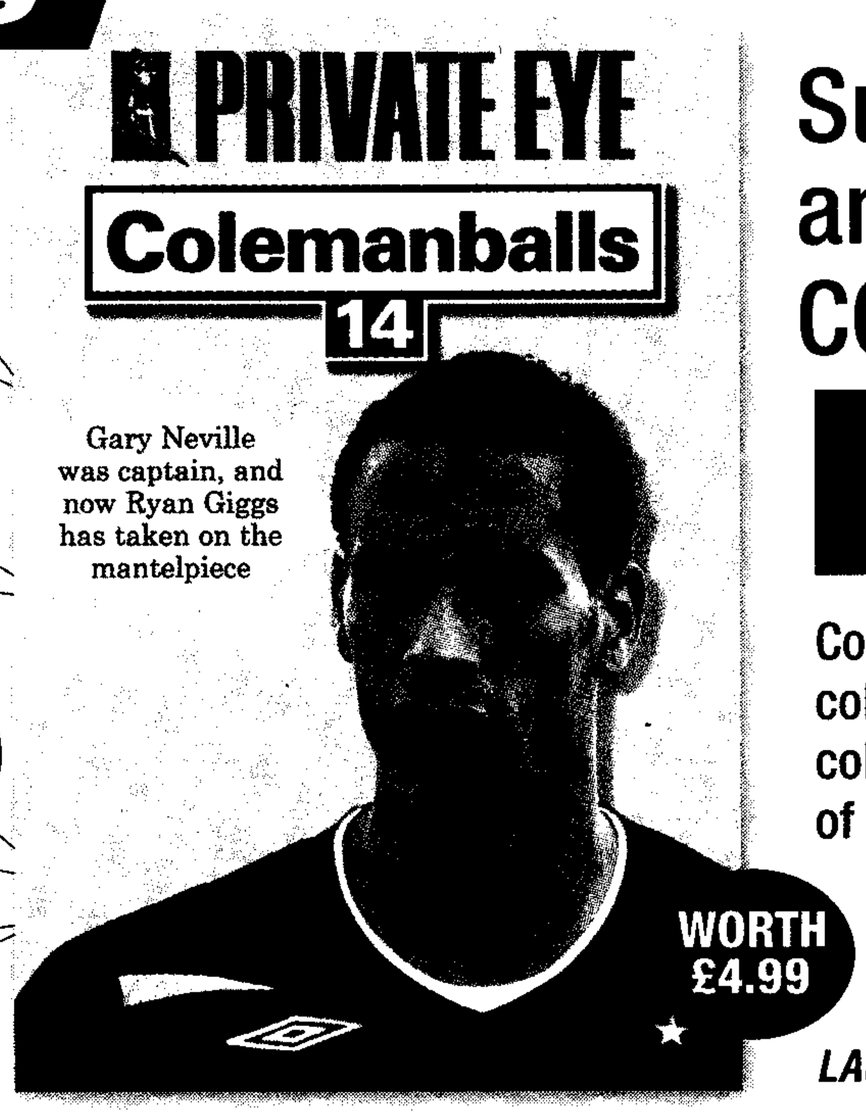

Gary Neville was captain, and now Ryan Giggs has taken on the mantelpiece

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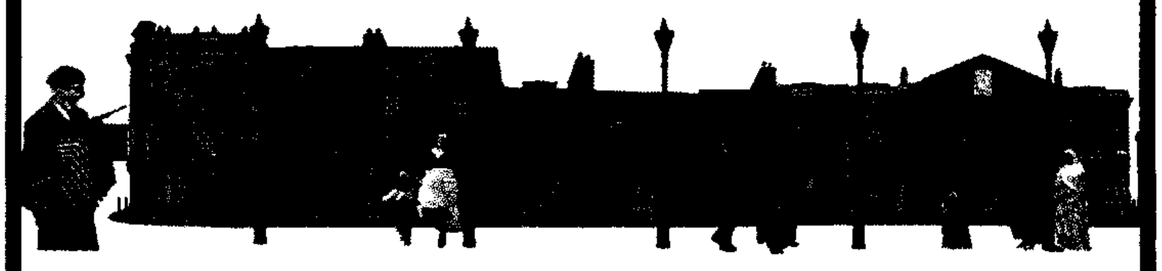

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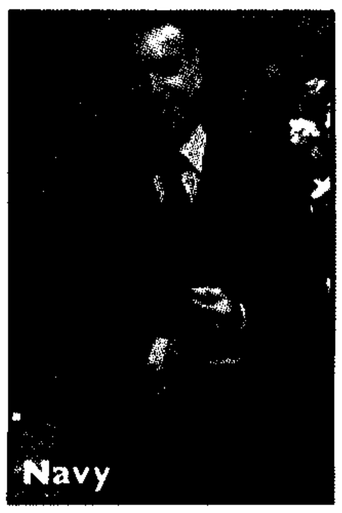

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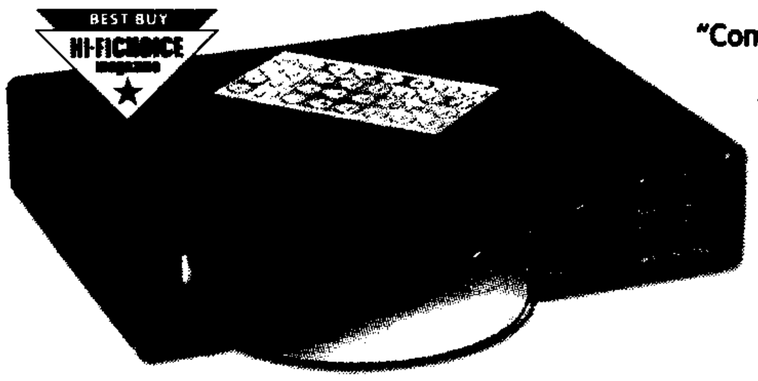

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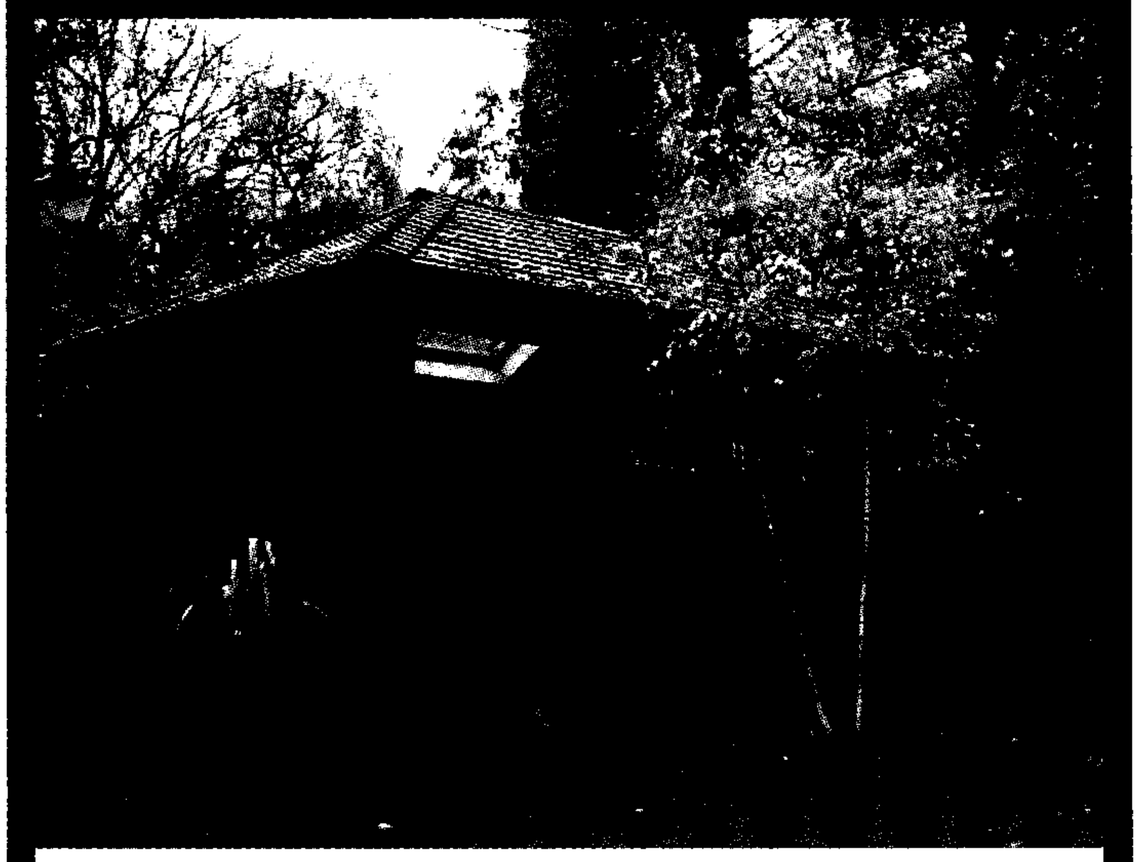

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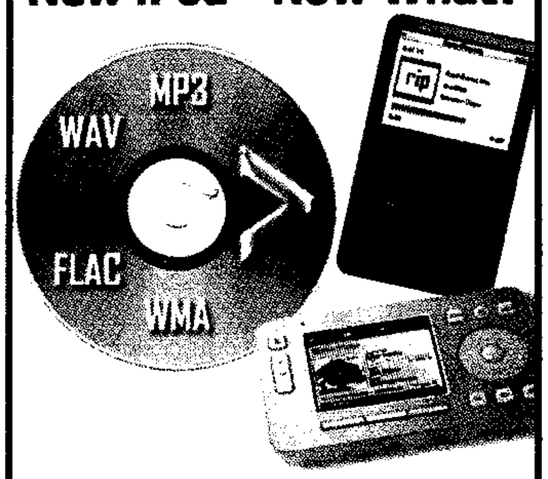

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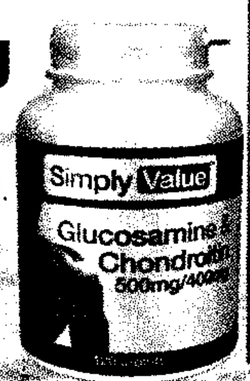

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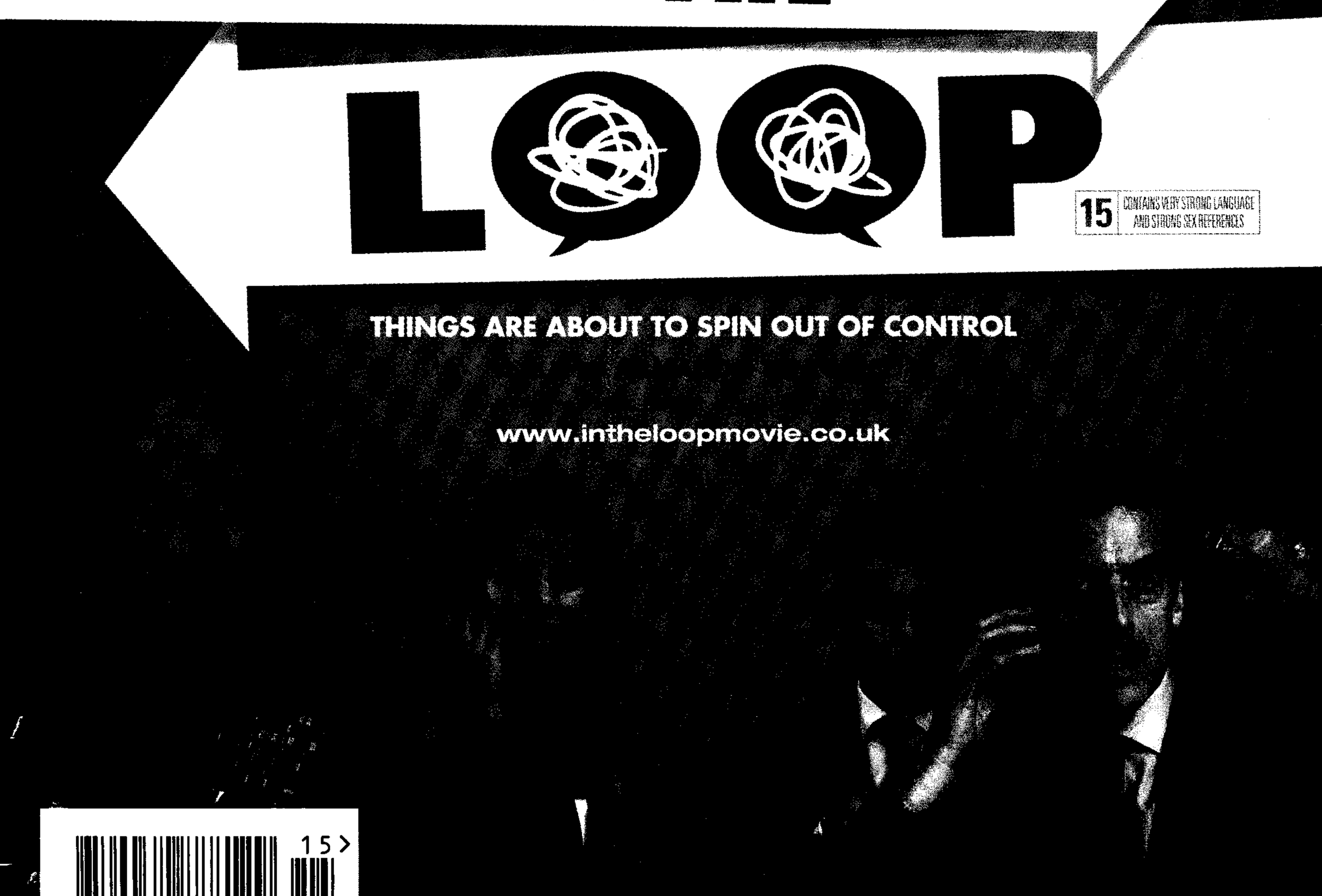

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